

"The Red Mazeppa," by Albert W. Aiken, author of "The Wolf Demon," and Capt. Mayne Reid's "Tracked to Death," in this number.

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THE RED MAZEPPA



THE MAD MAN OF THE PLAINS

It was a black steed, covered with foam, and it bore a helpless woman lashed to its back.

TRUTH IN LOVE.

BY JAMES HUNGERFORD.

Say not there is no truth in love,
Nor end my only dream of bliss;
My dearest hope in life above
Is meeting faithful hearts from this.
I can not think that truth exists
Alone in realms beyond the blue;
My heart, so constant, still insists
That other hearts are constant, too.
The earth would be a desert wide,
Without a verdant spot for rest,
If loving souls could not confide
In even those they love the best.
Without the peace and joys that flow
From heaven-descended love and trust,
This world were but a funeral show—
Its proper legend, "Dust to dust."
Believe me, love is ever true,
Though passion veil its glow from sight,
As planets still their course pursue
When hid in day's exceeding light.
Yes, love no change or passion mends;
And while the ceaseless ages roll,
It blooms—unfading as the stars,
Immortal as the human soul.

The Red Mazeppa:

OR,

THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS.

A STRANGE STORY OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER!

[THE RIGHT OF DRAMATIZATION RESERVED.]

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "OVERLAND KIT," "WOLF DEMON," "ACE OF SPADES," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE CANYON DE UVA.

"Still he urges on his wild career."

Down through the dark and fearful chasm of the rocks, called by the Mexicans the Canyon de Uva, and by the Indians, the "Gate to Hell," ran the waters of the Rio Sabinal.

The stream had laughed and danced along over the shelving rocks, rippling golden in the sunlight, but as it entered the frowning portals of the canyon it became a dull and sluggish stream—a river of ink. The dark

walls of the canyon, stretching upward as regular as though piled by giant hands in far-off ages, with a stern and angry frown forbade the sunbeams to toy with the pure and sparkling waters.

The red braves had aptly named the gloomy passage when they called it the portal to the shades below.

Many a dark and gloomy legend the old men of the Comanche and Apache tribes told of "The Gate to Hell."

Not a red brave for a hundred miles around would trust himself within the gloomy canyon after the evening shadows had closed in upon the earth and the night winds stirred the long grasses and the gay flowers that hid the surface of the prairie; and yet many a brave warrior trod in the Comanche moccasins or wore the plumed head-dress of the Apache nation. But the wild children of the prairie dreaded the evil spirits who—so wise men said—lurked within the gloomy canyon's center. They feared not a human foe, but the demon forms of the Gate to Hell, they shrunk from.

The sun was sinking in the west; its last dying rays decked the prairie with a flood of golden light; the surface of the river shimmered with crimson and purple, strangely blended in together.

All was peace and rest; it was the calm of the wilderness—of nature in her wildest freedom unrestrained by the curbing hand of man.

Slowly the sun went down; slowly the bright tints faded into cold and somber gray; slowly the shades of eventide shut in over the prairie, the river and the canyon.

And with the darkness came a strange, peculiar sound; a sound that hushed the laugh of the rippling waters, and stilled the gentle rustling of the flowers waving in the dreamy breeze.

The echoes of the canyon rung out hollow and mockingly on the still air.

All nature seemed appalled.

Then with a scream, half human in its intensity of despair, a fearful thing dashed at headlong speed from the dark shadows of the gloomy gorge.

Half beast, half human!

A noble black horse, clean in limb, perfect in form and bearing the arching neck and symmetrical head, that told of Arabian blood—of fair descent from the steeds of the desert, shod as with fire.

And on the back of the horse a rider that seemed a part of the steed.

A young and beautiful girl!

The warm color that flushed her skin told plainly that in her veins there ran the blood of two nations; mingled there was the "blue" blood of the Spaniard and the red life-current of the Indian, the master of the prairie.

Strange was the position in which she rode.

She was extended at full length upon the back of the horse, lying with her face upward. Strong lines of untanned leather, bound around her wrists and ankles, held her in her place.

Little wonder that she seemed a part of the horse, for she could move neither hand nor foot.

The cruel lashings cut into her flesh, and the dark-hued skin was swollen and bruised. The closed eyes and drooping head told that the girl was senseless.

She was habited in the fanciful Indian costume; the hunting-shirt reaching to the knee, and the dainty limbs below, so round and shapely, protected by gayly-fringed leggings. Her long hair, fine as silk and black as night's ebony mantle, floated down over the horse's shoulders in wild confusion.

The slight movement of the lips, as the faintly-drawn breath came through them, told that the girl still lived, although she seemed more like a corpse than aught else.

On went the horse at his topmost speed; his heaving flanks, and the white foam that dropped from his mouth, showed plainly that he was exerting his utmost strength.

A hundred yards or so had the unshod hoofs of the flying steed counted on the prairie, when, from the dark recesses of the canyon—forth from the Gate to Hell—came a howling pack of great, gaunt wolves.

Huge beasts with flaming eyes and snapping jaws.

As the leader of the pack, a gray veteran whose shaggy coat bore many a scar, beheld the flying steed, a howl went up from his jaws that was answered by the rest of the fierce and famished brutes.

The horse, quivering with fright, dashed onward at headlong speed, but tirelessly behind came the pack.

Well was it for the dark-hued maid that sense had forsaken her—that she was unconscious of her peril.

For what crime had one so beautiful been doomed thus to ride to death—a red Mazeppa?

CHAPTER II.

THE HEIR TO BANDERA.

FIVE miles above the town of Dhanis, on the Rio Sego, stood the hacienda of Bandera, a goodly mansion, built of unburnt brick, in the Mexican fashion. The absence of windows, and the loopholes for musketry that pierced the walls, indicated that the building had been framed for defense as well as for shelter.

And so it was, for Dhanis was on the frontier; beyond it lay the hunting-grounds of the wild red braves, who claimed the prairie as their own. Every now and then, with fire and steel, they swept down along the whole line of the Mexican frontier, for at the time of which we write, the Lone Star banner had not fluttered in the prairie breeze, and Texas was yet a Mexican province. Little by little the savage warriors forced back the line of civilization, and every year they held the ground they won. No wonder then that they despised the Mexicans, and laughed at them in derision.

Within the principal apartment of the Mexican mansion sat a middle-aged, stern-faced man, and a young and beautiful girl. The two were father and daughter.

Ponce de Bandera was a man of fifty. Though his hair and beard were grizzled, and his face lined by the unrelenting fingers of time, yet he was as straight in figure and as firm in step as when, thirty years before, he had worn the steel morion of the soldier, and kept step to the martial music that

heralded the advent of the ruling Spaniard.

Giralda, the sole daughter of the house of Bandera, was a girl of twenty. In person she was tall and straight, a very queen in bearing; her face a perfect oval, set in coils of jet-black hair; her eyes, black as night, sparkling like coals of fire, and yet as soft as velvet in their liquid tenderness.

Few could pass the queenly Giralda without the wish for a second glance.

The face of the father was stern and forbidding as he gazed upon his child. Evidently he was disconcerted.

"Giralda, you are a foolish girl!" he exclaimed, impatiently. "You act without sense or reason. From your haughty bearing one would think that you owned all Mexico."

"Am I not the heiress of Bandera?" asked the girl, a smile upon her moist, red lips.

"The heiress of Bandera?" the father said, slowly, a peculiar expression on his dark face.

"Yes; ever since I can remember, that has been told me. When I was but a child, the herdsman, who took me in his arms, and on the back of a flying steed galloped with me over the prairie, pointed out the countless herds of cattle, the vast droves of horses, then waved his hand in a circle around him, and said, 'All this is yours, little one; you are the heiress of Bandera. Twenty thousand acres are trod by the hoofs of your father's herds, all yours.' Have I not reason to be proud, then?"

"Be careful, else your pride may have a fall," said the old man, significantly. "Remember that this young man is one of the greatest land-holders in our province; his family, too, is good; the Tordillas can hold up their heads in the presence of royalty itself. They trace back their line to Ruy Diaz, the Old, the Champion of Bivar."

"And yet, with all his wealth—with all his high descent, I do not care for Ferdinand Tordilla," replied Giralda, carelessly.

"And therefore are you a foolish child," retorted the father, harshly. "What other young man in our province can compare

with him? If he so willed, he could build you a palace of golden ounces."

"One of the herdsmen once gave me a nightgale; the lattice that held him prisoner was a gilded one, but the poor bird pined for the branches of the pinon tree, and the flowers of the prairie; he beat his wings against his prison bars until his heart broke; and then he found freedom in the grave. The arms of the man I could not love would be prison bars to me; like the bird, I should struggle to escape. Gold is powerful, father, but love more powerful still."

"And do you love?" cried the father, quickly.

"For a second a glance of fire shone in Giralda's dark eyes, and then the ebullient light hid them from view."

"I love—," she said, slowly, "yes, I love you, father."

"And no one else?" he demanded, quickly.

"Who else should I love?" she replied, softly.

"You are playing with me, Giralda," the old man said, sternly. "I have eyes, and I know you too well to be deceived. You object to the suit of Ferdinand Tordilla, because you fancy some one else."

"But, father, if I understand you rightly, you urge me to accept Ferdinand because he is the richest man in our province—"

"No, no!" cried the father, quickly, "not solely for that reason alone, although of course it has weight; but he is also young, handsome, a dashing cavalier, fit mate for beauty. Do not think, my child, that I wish you to wed a money-bag. Look around upon the young men of our province; is there one of them that can compare with Ferdinand?"

"But if I do not care for him?"

"Tut! you do not know your own mind. You are but a butterfly passing from flower to flower, with no thought except for the present. Tordilla's wealth will buy you every thing that heart can desire."

"Except peace of mind," Giralda said, dryly.

"That is a fantasy!" cried the father, impatiently.

"Why should I covet his wealth when I am the heiress to Bandera? When, far as the eye can reach, east, west, north and south, all that I look upon will one day be mine? If report speaks truth, few estates in all Mexico are larger than Bandera's, and the beautiful girl raised her head with a gesture of pride as she spoke."

"Suppose some sudden blow should rob you of these broad acres, what then?" the old man asked, meaningly.

"That can never be," the girl replied, confidently. "Who can destroy yonder prairie, drive off the herds of cattle that fatten on its surface, or remove the ounces of gold that the bankers of Mexico hold to your credit?"

"Five hundred paces from the hacienda rolls the Rio Segó; it is calm and placid, now, a child might brave its power; yet I have seen it, a giant in strength, sweeping along the mighty pinon trees, and the tall cottonwoods on its bosom as though they were but straws. Some day the Segó may rise again and spread desolation and despair along its banks. Then, too, a hundred miles to the north there dwells a race of feather-garbed warriors; their skins are red, their hearts not white. The great Comanche chief, whom his brethren call the White Mustang, has sworn never to rest while the hacienda of Bandera guards the approach to Dhanis. Some day the red chiefs will come with fire and steel, and then, the culture and the wolf will make their home here."

"I do not fear, father," replied the girl, proudly. "The Comanches came last year, but when they retreated many an Indian pony who had borne a living warrior, carried a dead one."

"Yes, but since that time, the White Mustang has become the chief of the tribe; and he is by far the ablest warrior in all the Comanche nation."

"Still I do not fear."

"Perhaps there may be another claimant to the estate. You know that it came to me by my brother's death," the father said, slowly.

"You can not frighten me, father," replied Giralda, smiling. "I know that such a thing can not be. You only say this to make me accept the suit of Ferdinand."

"Time will tell you whether your prediction be true or false," and there was a grave look on the stern face of the old man as he spoke. "Giralda, do not attempt to deceive me; I know the reason why Ferdinand's suit is distasteful to you. That reason did not exist three days ago."

"Do you think so, father?" and there was a half-smile on Giralda's proud face as she spoke.

"Yes, for just three days ago, the American, whom the herdsmen call Gilbert the Mustang, came to Dhanis."

A burning blush swept over Giralda's face, and the long lashes closed down over the dark eyes.

An angry look clouded the face of the Mexican as he watched the play of Giralda's features.

"If I had doubted, your face now would have removed my doubts," he said, with a bitter accent. "For the sake of this unknown adventurer, whose only future lies in his life, his hunting-knife and lasso, you reject the hand of the richest gentleman in all our province. By the saints, girl, I swear you are mad! What witchcraft lies in the blue eyes of this American that he should fascinate you at the first glance, as the snake fascinates the bird?"

Giralda did not reply, but her glowing cheeks and downcast eyes betrayed her secret.

"Girl, I would rather see you in your grave than married to this American adventurer," the father exclaimed, harshly. "Banish him from your thoughts, for with my consent you shall never see him again."

Without a word, Giralda rose and left the apartment, but the expression upon her face boded defiance rather than submission.

An angry frown was upon Ponce de Bandera's brow as he watched the heavy door close after his daughter's light form.

"I shall have some trouble in bending her to my will," he muttered, "but she must obey. The blow may fall at any time which robs us of these broad acres and makes us beggars."

A servant conducting a stranger into the apartment interrupted the meditations of the old man.

Looking up, Bandera beheld a rather shabbily dressed man, whose garments were covered with dust. In person the stranger was above the medium light, and his massive and well-knit frame gave promise of great strength; his face was handsome, lit

up by great black eyes, fringed by coal-black hair, worn long, and falling in wavy masses down along his neck; a long, narrow mustache graced his upper lip. The face of the stranger bore evident marks of toil and exposure to sun and wind. There was a rakish look about the man that betrayed the adventurer in every movement; cruel lines about the eyes and mouth that told of fierce animal passions.

Bandera gazed with astonishment upon the new-comer.

The stranger nodded familiarly to the Mexican, and then addressed the servant.

"Son of my heart, you needn't wait—you can get out—yarnose! Your master and I have business to transact in private."

In wonder the servant withdrew, while Bandera asked himself if it was a madman who stood before him.

"You do not remember me, eh?" the stranger asked, with a smile, which revealed his white, fang-like teeth.

"No."

"That is wonderful," the stranger exclaimed, mockingly. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am called Lope, the Panther, by my friends; by the world at large, Señor Don Lope, a gentleman of limited means but of large expectations. I sometimes tell stories—wonderful stories! I can tell of a hacienda attacked at midnight by a band of Indians whose leader wore a white skin; of a man killed by the one who should have given his own life in his defense; of a lovely mother falling beneath the knives of the savages; of two helpless children sold to death. Oh! it's a wonderful story!"

"I do not care to hear it," Bandera exclaimed, impatiently.

"Oh! do you not?" asked the stranger, sarcastically: "not care to hear of the wonderful escape of the two babes—how they grew to age, and then came to claim the estates of Bandera?"

"Ah!" the Mexican started to his feet in astonishment.

CHAPTER III.

THE PANTHER'S OFFER.

The adventurer looked at the Mexican, a peculiar smile on his bronzed features.

"Aha! it is getting interesting, isn't it?" he asked, mockingly.

Bandera frowningly scowled upon the stranger, but replied not.

"Oh, you need not look at me that way," the Panther cried, sneeringly. "I have faced angry men before now, and they had glancing steel in their hands; and you, muzzled weapons of death, but I quailed not. By the way, señor, you are strangely lacking in hospitality; you haven't even invited me to be seated. *Voto a-brios!* I'll help myself to a chair, since you forget to offer me one."

And then the adventurer coolly sat down, extended his legs lazily along the floor, thrust his hands in his pockets, and laughed in the face of the Mexican.

With a powerful effort, Bandera choked back the rage that was swelling in his heart.

"You spoke of some one coming to claim the estates of Bandera," he said, again seating himself.

"Exactly."

"What do you know of this affair?"

"Every thing."

"You will excuse me if I doubt that."

"In five minutes I will remove your doubts," said the adventurer, confidently. "Do you think that possible?"

"Listen to my wonderful story, and judge."

"Go on."

"Twenty years ago, Juan de Bandera, your cousin, possessed the vast estates now held by you."

"There is nothing wonderful in that statement," interrupted Bandera; "that fact is known to all who resided in this neighborhood twenty years ago."

"Don't be impatient, and don't interrupt me, or you will make me lose the thread of my story," replied the adventurer, coolly. "You know that, good! Many other people know it, better! Before I get through, I'll tell you something that neither you nor anybody else knows. I alone, and no other living soul, possesses the wonderful secret."

"I am waiting," said Bandera, dryly.

"Your cousin, Juan de Bandera, twenty years ago, was a young and handsome cavalier, but a cloud was ever on his brow and he lived the solitude of the great prairie better than the bowery where beauty dwelt. You see my story will not be all dust and embellished with sundry poetical adornments," and the adventurer waved his hand gracefully in the air as he spoke.

"Proceed, sir."

"Patience, gentle señor; never hurry a woman before her looking-glass, a man who is going to be hung, or a story-teller in the practice of his vocation. To resume: Men wondered why the wealthy Juan courted solitude, and many a pretty girl wished that she could find favor in the eyes of the wealthiest man in the province. But mainly curiosity and woman's witchery alike were vain; Juan's secret remained a secret still; bright eyes, scarlet lips, and blushing cheeks had no power upon his frozen heart. Possibly you can tell why it was that your cousin avoided what men generally seek—woman's love?"

"What are your terms?"

"Oh, a mere nothing," replied the Panther, carelessly. "I am tired of knocking about the world; I have been a football for fortune long enough. I would fain settle down, the life of a landed proprietor would suit me exactly. So just give me your daughter in marriage, make me the heir to the estates of Bandera, and I shall be satisfied."

Bandera sprung to his feet in wrath; his eyes fairly blazed with rage.

"Give my child to you, cutthroat adventurer!" he cried. "Son of the devil, hence, or I'll have you lashed from my doors! I defy you and your tale of lies."

For a moment Lope looked at the Mexican, astonished at the sudden outbreak; then he slowly rose to his feet.

"You defy me, eh?" he said, through his clenched teeth.

"Begone, beggar!" cried the angry father. "Beggars! that is what you will be within a month, for within that time I'll strip you of the estates of Bandera."

Another moment and the Panther was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

GILBERT, THE MUSTANGER.

A LITTLE clump of timber overhanging the yellow waters of the Rio Sabinal, a dozen miles or so above the spot where the river, like a frightened, guilty thing, plunged into the gloomy jaws of the terrible Canyon de Uva.

"Exactly; Juan Bandera, in disgust, left the gay world, and sought for consolation amid the wild-flowers of the prairie. His penniless cousin kept a close watch upon him. Not content with robbing him of his heart's idol, he thirsted after his broad acres. He thought that despair might kill; but Juan de Bandera took the most cruel revenge. In a hunting excursion on the prairie, he found a young Indian girl. She was but a child, barely fifteen. She had been badly wounded by a fierce buffalo. The Mexican took her home, cured her hurt, then married her. When the news of the terrible blow for her loved her with all the passion that his iron nature was capable of. Like his cousin, he, too, possessed a son and daughter, heirs to his poverty."

"Then a demon thought took possession of his mind. If his cousin and his wife and children were dead, all would come to him. Few men would have thought of such a terrible deed, fewer still would have executed it, but he did. Now, señor, comes the tragedy. The night is dark, the stars in bed, and the moon hidden behind a cloud; the war-whoop of the Comanche sounds around the hacienda of Bandera; white-skinned Indians, decked in the garb and in the war-paint of the prairie chiefs, rush to the attack. Juan de Bandera, like a second Abel, fell by the hand of a second Cain; only, in this case, it was a cousin instead of a brother. The wife died, pierced to the heart by a random shot, but the two children—"

"Perished also, I suppose," interrupted Bandera, with a covert glance in the face of the adventurer.

"Did they?" and the Panther laughed; "my story says different. A herdman attached to the household of Juan Bandera, with the two babes in his arms, escaped the attack, and on a fleet horse sought safety, and found it, on the prairie. This herdman was a cunning knave; he knew how broad were the acres of Bandera; how valuable, in time to come the heirs would be. He guessed, too, from whom came the trail, from the man Bandera's life. So he placed the two babes in safety, and sought for fortune elsewhere. Years came and went; now the herdsmen has returned; he thinks it's time that the world should understand who are the heirs of Bandera. Take a good look at me, señor; I am somewhat older than I was twenty years ago; somewhat more brawny in muscle and darker in color, but I feel sure that you will remember me."

"You are the herdsmen," Bandera said, slowly.

"Your wisdom does you credit; I am the herdman. To speak more plainly, I am the man who holds the destinies of the estates of Bandera in his hand," and the adventurer closed his broad palm significantly as he spoke.

"I do not understand you," Bandera said, doubtfully.

"The saints forbid that I should tell you that you lie, to your teeth and in your own house, but you do, never-the-less," the Panther said, coolly. "You know what I am going to say well enough. I can produce the heir to Bandera; I can wrest the estates from you. How much will you give to have me keep back this heir?"

"Heir—there were two."

"Exactly, but I've only got one, the girl."

"And the boy?"

"Who knows?"

"To dispute the estates with me you will require undoubted proof that the person you produce is really Bandera's heir. A little bit of a sneer was in Bandera's voice."

"I generally look at my cards before I play," the Panther replied, smilingly. "When I escaped with the two babes I placed them in secure hands; had an account of the whole affair drawn up, and took such measures that, in after years, I could easily prove the identity of the two children."

"And the person with whom you placed the two?"

"Oh! of course I shall tell you that!" and the adventurer laughed long and loudly.

"Well, it is not of the slightest consequence to me," Bandera said, carelessly.

"Oh, no!" and the Panther laughed again; "my worthy and esteemed friend, I have dealt with tricky men before. I am playing for a great stake here, and I don't intend to lose a single point of the game."

"To business, then," Bandera said, abruptly. "You can produce this heir?"

"Yes."

"And for a certain sum you will agree to destroy all the proofs by means of which she can claim the estates?"

"Yes," and the adventurer rubbed his hands together gleefully; "it is really a pleasure to do business with a man like yourself."

"What are your terms?"

"Oh, a mere nothing," replied the Panther, carelessly. "I am tired of knocking about the world; I have been a football for fortune long enough. I would fain settle down, the life of a landed proprietor would suit me exactly. So just give me your daughter in marriage, make me the heir to the estates of Bandera, and I shall be satisfied."

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Another moment and the Panther was gone.

From the bank of the river the rolling prairie stretched north and south, east and west, the gently undulating surface, broken here and there by the little knolls and clumps of trees and bushes, known to those learned in prairie-craft as "Islands."

By the little bunch of timber, whose leaves dropped over the rippling water as though, like a fair and dainty girl, they wished to behold themselves mirrored in the stream, were two men.

The fashion of their garments, the cast of their features, their weapons—in fine, all about them, told plainly that neither Mexican, Spanish nor Indian blood ran within their veins.

The taller of the two stood by the bank of the stream, leaning upon a long rifle—one of the kind famous in our border history, and called, from the stalwart woodmen who bore them, Kentucky rifles.

His eyes were bent in dreamy meditation upon the rippling water. He was a young and handsome fellow, with his manly, well-proportioned form, his yellow, curling locks, bright blue eyes, white skin—though now somewhat darkened by the warm kiss of the day-god—and rosy cheeks. A perfect picture of health, of manly beauty, was Gilbert Vance, better known, though, along the frontier, as Gilbert the Mustang, than by his own proper name.

The Mustang was attired in a suit of buck-skin, fancifully trimmed with porcupine-quills, stained red and black, yellow and blue, the work evidently of some dusky maid, daughter to the prairie.

The companion of the Mustang was a man of forty. He, too, was dressed like the other in the prairie garb, but his hunting-shirt and leggings showed traces of toil, and of fierce hand-to-hand encounter.

In person, he was a little above the medium height. His eyes were a clear gray in color, sharp and piercing in their glance; his hair a curious mixture of gray, and yellow. His face was seamed with many a line, and told plainly of hardships suffered and of dangers braved.

He also was armed with the long Kentucky rifle, that carried a ball hardly larger than a pea, and yet in the hands of the skillful herdman was certain death to game or foe at a hundred paces. A long hunting-knife, whose blade bore many a dent, was thrust, sheathless, through the belt of untanned leather that girded in his supple waist.

The prairie-chief—and well he deserved that title—was known as Davy Crockett; the surest shot—the keenest eye on the trail, from the Missouri to the Gulf, and the best Indian-fighter that ever drew a bead on a painted, moccasined warrior.

Crockett was lazily reclining on the grass, busily engaged in hacking off a piece of tobacco from a huge twist, of the brand commonly called nigger-head.

Now and then he cast his eyes shrewdly upon the moody face of the young Mustang, and a quiet smile appeared upon his honest features.

Ten paces from the two men two horses cropped the long grass, sociably side by side.

One, a dark-brown mare, clean in limb, broad in shoulder, and bearing the unmistakable marks that told of blood and high descent; the other, a fox-lorn-looking mustang, dirtily yellow in color—a clay-bank—the hide singed here and there as though the beast had passed through a prairie fire; the evil eyes, the ears laid back on the head, betrayed that the animal's temper was far from being a good one.

The brown steed, "Mary," was the horse of the Mustang; the other, the mustang "Jerusalem," belonged to Crockett, and, like a singed cat, was far better than he looked.

"Say, Gil, tryin' to look a hole in the drink, eh?" exclaimed Crockett, suddenly.

The Mustang started, roused from his reverie; a half-smile came over his handsome face.

"No, not that exactly," he replied. "I was only thinking."

"Bout what?" asked Crockett, shrewdly.

"Well, not any thing particular."

"And a gal in gen'ral," interrupted the hunter.

Just a little shade of annoyance passed over the face of the Mustang.

"Why should you think that?" he asked.

"Thunder! think I'm a doddered fool—lost my eyesight, eh? Why, Gil, I kin read your face just as easy as a coon takes to a hollow tree, when three darkies and a yaller dog is arter him. I never do guess much, you know; be sure you're right, then go ahead; that's my motto!"

"You think, then, that you can read my thoughts in my face?" Gilbert asked.

"May I never put my old hide outside of a pint of good old Kentucky corn-juice of I can't!" replied Crockett, confidently. "Why, you're in love with this 'greaser' gal, the darter of that sour old cuss, Bandera, the big dog round this hyer clearin'." Over head an ears in love, an' your feet stuck in the air, 'cept the gal's lips, a fat priest, an' a wedding-ring will ever pull you out of it."

"You are a shrewd guesser, Dave," the young man said, with a sad smile on his manly face, "but I will not own that you have guessed the truth, for to even dream of winning this peerless girl, so bright in her beauty, so holy in her gentleness, is as foolish as the wish to tear down a star from the sky above us. She is too good for me; never until I stood in her presence, saw the angel in her clear eyes, the purity that bespoke itself in every look, every motion, did I understand how utterly unworthy I am of the love of such a woman."

"Oh, wake snakes, an' come at me!" cried Crockett, in astonishment; "have I been keepin' company with any sich ornery cuss as you have just made yourself out to be? Wa-al, now you kin jist take me ears for pin-cushions if I would have believed it, if you hadn't a-said so yourself!"

Gilbert laughed at Crockett's comic despair.

"You understand me well enough. We have not shared the same blanket for three years without your knowing me truly. I may be worthy to be your friend, Crockett, and yet not worthy to take this girl from her home and friends to live for me alone. I can not well explain the feeling, but she seems so far above me, so utterly out of my world. I approach her as the heathen would draw near to the sacred image which he worships. There is an air of sanctity enshrine her which forbids close contact. I should almost as soon think of asking the stars to descend and place themselves within my grasp as to ask this girl to bless me with the holy, priceless treasure of her love."

"Gil, the gal that can't love, ain't half a gal," said the hunter, shrewdly. "Why,

it's woman's nature to love something, 'tain't a fault. The good Ruler that put the instinct into our hearts, didn't put it there not to be used. Why, that diamond-eyed feminine is jist spilt for some good, whole-some he-critter to love. Lordy, she's got more good old tenderness locked up in that little heart of hers than thar's skeeters in a cane-brake."

And Crockett brought his hand down upon his brawny thigh as if to give emphasis to his words.

Gilbert laughed, but did not reply.

"Go in an' win," continued the hunter; "it's a poor shoot that's afraid of himself. Why ain't you, chance as good as anybody else's? Go for it, like a sick kitten for a hot brick!"

"But if she should not care for me?"

Gilbert said, slowly.

"You'll never know unless you find out, an' you'll never find out unless you try. She's human, so are you. Maybe she is an angel an' you ain't; she'll fetch you up to her side, never you fear. That's jist what sich angels are sent into this hyer world for; for to make us poor sinners a durned sight better than we are. Why, this 'greaser' Tordilla is a-shinin' round her, like a hungry b'ar around a big bee-hive," exclaimed Crockett.

"I had an idea that he was in love with her," said the Mustang, thoughtfully.

"Sartin! why, a man kin see it with one eye. Ain't goin' to let that yaller don carry off your angel, are you? I reckon, that if it were me, I'd walk into his effections putty lively, jumpin' Jehoshaphat!"

"He is wealthy, and I—"

"A man," cried the hunter, "an' that's what a gal wants. Sho! she ain't a-goin' to ask whether you own a thousand acres or only the six foot of sile that we'll all fill when we go under. You've got health, strength; if you can't carve out a home for the gal you love, you don't ought to have her."

"Right, Crockett!" cried the Mustang, suddenly and decidedly. "I will try for this girl's love—for I do love her—if a thousand rivals stood in my way. I think the girl likes me, but it is so hard to tell sometimes. Her eyes have seemed to look kindly upon me, yet it may be only the kindness that her gentle heart teaches her to bestow upon the stranger. But, win or lose, she is a price worth years of toil to gain, and once my own, I feel that her love would make for me that heaven on earth, which, in my life of toil, I never yet have known."

"Maybe the greaser won't cuss some of you git the gal!" said Crockett, chuckling.

"I think he fears me," the Mustang said, thoughtfully. "Dave, I did not tell you why I sought the prairie to-day, but now I will. I met this Ferdinand Tordilla last night. A few bantering words passed between us, half-jest, half-earnest, regarding my skill as a Mustang. There is a wild, black stallion on the prairie that never yet has felt the lasso of the capturer. I have waged my ride against twenty gold ounces that, within three days, I will bring the wild stallion into Dhanis."

"The horse is said to be mad," said Crockett, reflectively. "I have often heard of him; the Indians call him 'The Lightning.' He has killed a dozen or more who have attempted his capture."

"Within three days I will tame The Lightning or Gilbert the Mustang will never throw lasso more!" cried the young man, firmly.

Then over the crest of the rolling prairie came a fearful thing.

It was a black steed, covered with foam, and it bore a helpless woman lashed to its back.

On came the horse, maddened with fright, and a score of hungry wolves yelled at its heels!

"By heaven, it is The Lightning!" cried Gilbert, in astonishment.

With the speed of the wind the horse flew by

thee; and thou, stout men-at-arms, who ride at Liederick's command, mourn for thy leader, for the ax of the "Wolf" has bit deep into the morion of the trusty soldier!

On pushed Ludwig and his band, bearing the lovely Anna—on through the darkness of the night. Deep they spur; fast they ride; until before them they see the dark towers of Enhoven.

Anna had revived during the flight. Better for her, perhaps, had she never woken again, for she was a helpless victim in the hands of her father's deadliest foe.

The party dismounted and entered the castle. Anna was given in charge of two women, the wives of some of the Free Lances, and they conveyed her to a spacious and well-furnished apartment. Refreshments were set before her, which the women pressed her to eat; but her thoughts were far removed from mere bodily comforts. Her mind returned again and again to her lover, stricken down like a tree in the forest. In agony she asked herself if they were never to meet again. Not until this moment did she fully realize how much and how truly she loved him.

Meanwhile Ludwig was among his assembled soldiers in the great hall of the castle, where the wassail rung loud and long.

A motley crew were these soldiers of fortune—Free Lances, as they were termed—men who fought for hire, and whose life and being hung on their swords. All nations of Europe were represented in that band. Here was the ruddy-faced Englishman who had fought under the Red Cross banner on many a bloody field; here the mercurial Frenchman, who would risk limb and life for the sake of boasting of some fair lady's kiss; here the yellow-haired and sluggish Fleming, the swarthy Spaniard, and Italy's dark son, who many a tale could tell of foul assassination and secret poison; cutthroats, outcasts from their country and their kind, and yet, withal, good soldiers.

A shout of welcome greeted the entrance of their chief. Ruffian-like, they respected and feared him, because he was the stronger. As has been said, few soldiers in Germany were as good as Ludwig, the Wolf of Enhoven.

"Free Lances of Enhoven!" and the clear voice of Ludwig resounded through the hall, "the men-at-arms of Cleves, of Gueldres and of Hanault are gathering in yonder city, to assault our tower. Arnold of Gueldres has forgotten the fate of his soldiers two years ago when they ran like whipped curs from the shadow of our fortalice, and sought for refuge within the walls of their accursed city. The best soldier that they boast, stout Liederick du Bucq, will not lead the lances of Gueldres against the tower of Enhoven, for he has felt the teeth of the "Wolf" this night, and 'tis not likely he'll ever draw sword again."

A wild shout declared the pleasure of the outlaws; they had not forgotten the prowess of the young soldier, two years before, and since that time they had witnessed the flash of his long rapier in many a petty skirmish, and never had they encountered him but defeat and disaster had befallen them.

Ludwig smiled grimly as he beheld the effect of his words. He continued:

"Followers of the 'Wolf,' the men of Gueldres to-morrow will seek us in Enhoven's tower. If we beat them, ere a month has passed, we'll seek them in the town of Gueldres; and the sluggish burghers will tremble when they hear the howl of the 'Wolf' ringing through their streets."

Again a wild shout from the Free Lances; and visions of plunder and riot in helpless and sacked Gueldres danced before their eyes.

"These noble gentlemen have sworn to give us no quarter; so, take no prisoners in the coming fight, but kill all, whether burgher or gentle," said the "Wolf," fiercely. "Swiftness, sent out scouts to give us warning of the approach of the foe," and with this order, the "Wolf" left them to visit his prisoner.

Stuñfel, though, did not obey at once; he had been absent in the city for fully a month, acting as a spy. Ludwig, for nearly a year, had been scheming to abduct Anna, the fame of whose beauty resounded throughout all Brabant. Of course the spy had much to tell his comrades, so that nearly an hour passed before he obeyed the order of Ludwig, and dispatched the scouts. That day worked a wondrous change in the fortunes of the "Wolf," as will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER IV. THE SURPRISE.

LUDWIG passed to an anteroom, and removed his helmet. Let us describe him as he stands there in all the pride of manhood and of strength.

The "Wolf" had seen perhaps twenty-five years, though care and the toil of warfare made him look much older. His face was large, and of the pure German type. A bluish-gray eye, with a glance as quick and piercing as that of a hawk; a large nose, hooked like the beak of an eagle; small, thin lips, closely compressed together, half hid by a long yellow mustache, while a pointed beard of the same hue covered his chin. His hair was a golden yellow, worn long, and falling almost to his shoulders, with ends curling under.

As we have said, Ludwig's face was purely German, as was also his name; and yet, his spurs were won, and his fame first made in Italy, of which it was said he was a native. If this were so, his was a strange fate for an Italian.

He opened the door and entered the room wherein sat the prisoner, fair Anna of Gueldres. She started at his approach, and gazed curiously upon him, with looks not unmixed with apprehension. The two women retired.

"Lady, I trust you have recovered from your fright?" said the "Wolf," courteously. "Yes, sir," replied Anna. "You are Ludwig of Enhoven?" she then asked, for the "Wolf" had often been described to her, and she recognized the likeness.

"So I am called, lady."

"Why have I been dragged from my home? What wrong have I ever done to you that you should commit this outrage?" questioned Anna.

"Fair lady, you have never wronged me, and most humbly I crave your pardon for this act."

"Your motive, then?"

"A few words will explain," said the robber chief. "Over all our land—throughout Flanders and Brabant, ay, even in France itself—Anna, of Gueldres, is spoken of as being the fairest maiden that e'er the sun looked upon. Not only do they call you beautiful, lady, but they say that the gentleness and goodness of your disposition

are equaled only by the beauty of your face."

This spoke the "Wolf," in, for him, a singularly winning tone. Anna blushed, and her eyes sought the ground in visible confusion, at these warm praises; but a few more words from Ludwig and she raised her head, with a tinge of anger burning on her cheeks.

Half Germany said 'Anna d' Egmont is the loveliest lady in our land,' and the other half said 'Ludwig, of Enhoven, is the bravest lance.' I do not say this in compliment to myself, but only to explain my position. What then more natural than that Ludwig should fall in love with Anna, although he had never seen her, and that he should desire her for his wife?"

"Oh, your wife?" cried Anna.

"Yes, lady, with the aid of some good, holy monk, and your consent."

"That you shall never have!" said Anna, impetuously.

"Then I'll do without it," said the "Wolf" coolly. "I fain would have come to Gueldres openly, and pressed my suit, but that your father and I are not on good terms. For the last time he visited me, two years ago, I gave him such a warm reception that, but for the young soldier, whom tonight I struck down beneath my ax, he would have stayed here forever, and found a snug resting-place in the moat at the base of my walls. Therefore, to win you was but one way, and that was to use the cunning and the strength of the wolf, whose name I bear."

"No priest will dare to wed the daughter of Gueldres' Count to an outlaw such as you are!" said Anna, all her father's spirit speaking in her voice.

"A man will do much to save his life; and every monk that falls within my hands, that refuses to perform the ceremony, shall die."

"Oh, have you no heart?" pleaded Anna, tears filling her eyes.

"Yes, a heart that is full of love for thee; that is, such love as I feel, which is not much, I own. Still, such as it is, all shall be thine. I like thee, Anna, although I never before set eyes upon thee. Thou hadst best consent freely to the union, for I tell thee frankly—mine thou shalt be, with the rites of the church, if thou wilt consent; without them, if thou dost refuse; but in either case I will possess thee; and if thou wilt not listen to reason, then force shall accomplish my object. I would not deceive thee, Anna, even to save my soul, which the worthy monks say is in Satan's keeping already. I have told you what you may expect; so be prepared to abide the consequences."

"Villain!" cried Anna, feeling that she was indeed helpless in his power; "to-morrow the troops of Gueldres come, and they will tear me from thy hands!"

"To-morrow! ho! ho!" laughed the "Wolf," and the harsh tones grated fearfully on the ear of his destined victim. "To-morrow will be too late to save thee from my arms! To-night will see thee mine, forever. An' thy father's troops will save thee, they must make the attempt ere the world be half an hour older!"

"Oh, man! man! have you no pity?" pleaded poor Anna, sinking upon her knees with clasped hands.

"Pity? pity?" questioned the "Wolf," in a tone full of anger and of menace; "pity to any human being, in whose veins runs the blood of D'Egmont, or was born in yonder town of Gueldres? No! From the first hour that the land of Brabant saw the gleam of my lances, or heard my war-cry pealing on the air, no man, woman or child of Gueldres, ever fell within my hands, that I did not shed their blood. You are the first from that accursed city, that I ever spared. And why do I spare you?" questioned the "Wolf," his eyes flashing fire, and a deep frown upon his brow, "you, the daughter—the only child of my deadliest foe—Anna, in whose veins runs the blood of Arnold D'Egmont, Gueldres' Count? Why do I spare you?" he repeated with fierce emphasis. "Listen and I will tell. I hate your father as hotly as does the prince of darkness the angels above. I know that he would rather have you dead than have you mine. I feel that it will wound him more than even a dagger struck to his heart. But if I make you my lawful bride, by the rites of the church, at your father's death I will claim Gueldres as his son-in-law and heir; will back that claim, if need be, by a thousand lances! and the tone of the "Wolf" swelled with triumphant exultation.

"You will not dare!" said Anna, sick at heart with terror.

"Will I not? When the time comes you shall see. In my short life I have dared many things—not the least of which was bearing you off, this night, from Gueldres, right between the teeth of its lances."

"Mercy! mercy!" pleaded Anna. "Why should you hate my father and his city so bitterly?"

"Why? I will tell you. Men call me an adventurer! a cutthroat! a ruffian leader of ruffian Free Lances! and yet my blood is as good and my descent as high as any prince in Germany. Anna, didst thou ever hear the story of Albert of Enhoven, the former lord of this tower and domain?"

"Yes," replied Anna; "he was a traitor to his country."

"That is the lie current in Gueldres!" cried the "Wolf," angrily; "because, forsooth, he claimed the right to think for himself and joined the Spaniards instead of the French! And then, when his allies like cowards deserted him, with his kinsmen and his followers he retired to this, his ancestral tower. Then, soon, around it gathered every lance that could be raised in Brabant and Flanders, all hounded on by your father, Arnold D'Egmont, crying 'traitor!' Ten to one, the assailants at last overpowered the little band of defenders, and the tower was won by assault. Then came the scene of carnage and of slaughter. 'No quarter to the traitors!' was the cry of Gueldres and the league! Here, in this chamber, the last struggle took place. Here, Albert of Enhoven and a few kinsmen, hearts of gold, tried the last chance for life. One by one they fell beneath the press of numbers, and, fighting to the bitter end, Albert of Enhoven was stricken down by the sword of your father. His only son, a boy of fifteen, was taken by his father's side, mortally wounded as it was thought. The victors paused, for there were no more to slay, and the line of Enhoven was extinct. But the boy was not dead; he only feigned death, for his wound was slight. When the assassins, for they were so, left the room, he ran to that window, jumped from it into the moat, forty feet below. The water broke his fall, and he escaped unhurt. Then he fled to Italy; and, boy though he was, joined a band of Free Lances. Time passed on

—the stripling became a man; the soldier became a captain; and then he determined to return and claim his ancestral halls again. The band of Free Lances that he led were hardy soldiers, and well they backed that claim. Anna, of Gueldres, can you not guess now who I am? Men call me Ludwig of Enhoven, and they do so rightly, for my name is Ludwig, I am count Albert's son, and lord of Enhoven!"

Anna heard this strange story with terror, and her heart sunk within her. Now she knew why the "Wolf" bore such a hatred to Gueldres and to her father. Alas! poor Anna, what shall save thee?

"Come!" said the "Wolf," "our bridal rites wait. Passion and vengeance alike cry for thee."

Ludwig advanced toward her; poor Anna was helpless with terror.

Heaven alone could save her!

"Hanault and Gueldres, strike on!" rung the war-cry of the league, right in the courtyard of Enhoven castle. Then followed the clash of arms, the desperate cry of the Free Lances, "Ludwig for Enhoven, ho!" and the general din of battle.

Ludwig started in astonishment, while Anna sunk fainting to the floor.

"We are surprised!" cried the "Wolf."

A Free Lance, with Ludwig's battle-ax and helmet, rushed into the apartment.

"Captain!" he cried, breathless with haste, "the foe have gained the courtyard by the secret postern. Stuñfel has been killed by their leader, and our men are taken at disadvantage."

"Who leads them?" cried Ludwig, fastening on his helmet.

"Louis of Hanault. I know him by his helmet and his golden mail!"

Ludwig ran down the stairs in hot haste and dashed, battle-ax in hand, into the fray, shouting his war-cry:

"Strike for the 'Wolf'!"

The desperate onset of the "Wolf," as he fought his way through opposing ranks, bringing down a man-at-arms at every blow of his ax, encouraged his followers, who had been giving way before the press of Flemish steel; and, with new hopes, they fought the desperate fight.

The lances of the league nobles outnumbered, however, nearly two to one the soldiers of Ludwig, and also had on their side the advantage of the surprise. So, slowly but surely, they gained ground.

Ludwig saw this, and fought with the fury of a tiger. The men of Gueldres, stricken down around him in a circle, by the blows of his heavy ax, gave way in terror before the "Wolf," until, at last, he found himself face to face with the leader of the attacking force, Louis of Hanault, clad from head to foot in golden mail. Now commenced a desperate encounter, as Ludwig and Hanault crossed axes. Hanault, however, had the advantage in size, and was fully as skilled in the use of the weapon as the "Wolf."

Fast clashed the axes together as blow ran on blow. At last the force of one of Ludwig's strokes carried his ax beyond the guard, and the steel edge of Hanault's weapon came down full on the side of Ludwig's helmet, burst it from its fastenings, and the steel morion fell to the ground, leaving the head of the "Wolf" uncovered. Ludwig made a desperate stroke to retrieve the error; again his guard was false, and the keen edge of Hanault's ax sunk deep into the unprotected head of Ludwig. Down he went, stone dead, to the ground, his long yellow hair crimsoned here and there with his life's blood.

The chase was up; the hunt was done; the "Wolf" had fallen, and Enhoven's tower was won!

The Free Lances fled in dismay at the death of their leader, and as the great gate had been opened, nearly all the unwounded ones had escaped; let us hope, to lead better lives.

Allied knights are gathered in the banquet hall, where Count Arnold, who had accompanied the expedition in his litter, gladly held his daughter in his arms. By his side stood the victor in the golden mail. He removed his helmet and displayed the brown locks of Liederick du Bucq, for it was he who had won the fight and killed the "Wolf." Hanault was close at hand, in plain battle armor.

The plan of Arnold succeeded well, and all declared Liederick the bravest lance in Germany.

The blow from the ax which Liederick received in the garden, glanced from the helmet, and for a few moments only stunned the soldier. The instant he recovered, he led the lances to Enhoven, only stopping to don the golden armor of Hanault. Stuñfel's scouts being delayed, the hour gave time for Liederick to completely encircle the castle with his forces, and scarcely had the scouts passed beyond the castle gates, when they fell into his hands, and one of them, in exchange for his life, revealed the secret postern.

Liederick returned to Gueldres in triumph, and ere six months were over, became the husband of "Anna, the Pearl."

The castle of Enhoven was demolished by Count Arnold's orders.

The body of Ludwig was buried in the courtyard where he fell. And naught now, but an unsightly pile of ruins, with the long wild grass and noxious weeds, the outcasts of the class growing thick about them, mark the resting-place of the last of his race, Ludwig, the Wolf of Enhoven.

THE END.

Laura's Peril: OR, THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

A STORY OF LOVE, FOLLY, AND REPENTANCE.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XX.

HUNTING THE GAME DOWN.

TOWARD the close of a hazy September day, the steamer Golden Gate steamed into the harbor of San Francisco. The sky was clear, and the bay, like a vast mirror, caught the sunset tints from the sky and reflected them down deep, deep in its bosom, while the infant metropolis sat upon its circling hills like a coronet placed on the brow of the landscape to show where the Occident ended and the Orient began.

Among the passengers gathered on the deck were Sarah Rook and Samuel Blaize. These two stood a little apart, and while the remainder of the passengers indulged in all sorts of comments upon the surrounding

objects—the scenery and the city—they were silent.

At length Blaize spoke:

"The city's changed a heap since I saw it last. I'd hardly know old Frisco."

"Indeed; has the change been so great?" asked Mrs. Rook, to whom the progress of the new world was yet a mystery.

"Changed much!" he repeated. "Well, I should say it has; it has changed altogether. Why, when I left Frisco there was scarce and level space between the foot of the hills and the water."

The woman smiled incredulously.

"You don't mean to say that the land has grown out into the water? That would be a geological feat sufficient to attract the Savans of the old world hither?" Her words and her manner evidenced a contempt for the ignorance of her companion.

"I wouldn't be the first American object that has attracted people from the old world," he said, in answer, looking out over the bay as he spoke.

Sarah Rook's eyes glanced at him. Was he referring to her unfortunate husband's infatuation for Laura Robart? Had she been sure of that she could have struck him to the heart, there where he stood, without the slightest compunction of conscience; but no, his face was too dull and stupid; he was not the kind of a man to make a keen, pointed home-thrust—a blundering, ignorant, avuncular man, nothing more.

"Now I see," exclaimed Blaize, "how it is. They've cut away the hill and dumped it into the bay, and in that way have added a couple of squares. Ah! there's Kearney street and Montgomery."

The steamer was very close to the city, and Blaize pointed out the thoroughfares named, with pride and exultation.

A half an hour after, Mrs. Rook and Sam stood upon the dock, amid a wilderness of bales and boxes, and a maelstrom of cries and shouts.

"Cab, sir?—Occidental Hotel. Cab, sir, for lady, sir?" The cabman addressed Blaize and the latter said, turning to his companion:

"The distance is not far, but maybe we had better ride—for the sake of appearances."

"Yes, certainly," was the reply. "Give the man the baggage checks."

Sam did as requested, and then the driver opened the door of the shiny vehicle and handed Mrs. Rook in, while he and Blaize went in quest of the trunks.

They returned presently, and the Jehu mounted his box, cracked his whip and off they rattled.

Their mission was not referred to that night, but the next morning, after breakfast, Mrs. Rook said:

"Blaize, we had better have an attorney now to advise us. Do you know any person?"

"Let me see; I used to know an old fellow named Lambie, but maybe he's dead before this—most likely is."

"Is his office far from here?"

"No; on Washington street, five minutes' walk."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"What sort of a man? ah! yes, of course. A very nice man; always treated me clever."

"But, is he shrewd, and discreet; does he know enough to keep a secret?"

"Does he? Well I should say he does. Jack Lambie is one of your sharpers, do any thing for a client. I had a case once here in '83, about a pre-emption right, and he put it right through for me."

"Well, now, Mr. Blaize, I want you to call on Mr. Lambie at once, and tell him I would like to see him, this evening if convenient."

Sam assented and departed. About noon he returned.

"I found him in the same old dingy den," he said, "sitting in the same chair in which I saw him last, and, I believe, with the same identical book in his hand. It's an odd conceit, but, with a smile, 'blame me if I didn't think he's never stirred since that spring morning I left him last.'"

Mrs. Rook smiled, too, the first smile Sam had seen upon her face for many a long day.

That evening Mrs. Rook and Sam Blaize were in their private parlor, awaiting the entrance of Mr. Lambie.

The woman was sitting in a large reception chair, with her head propped back and her dark eyes fixed on the pendants of the chandelier, while Blaize sat at one of the open windows, and beat a noisy tattoo on the sill with his fingers.

The woman was becoming impatient, when a hasty, tripping tread was heard in the corridor, and the next moment an obsequious servant appeared at the door and presented a card on a silver salver.

"The gentleman wishes to see Mrs. Rook," said the servant, as the latter scanned the clumsy card on which was printed, in poor script, the name and profession of the person she was most anxious to see.

"Please tell him to walk up." The servant withdrew, and Mrs. Rook was about to resume her seat, when a dapper little man, of forty-five or thereabouts, with a pair of extremely large glasses on his nose, and very little hair on his head, entered. He was attired in a suit of rusty black, with an amplitude of white cravat, and carried—in a hand which at first glance appeared to be nothing but a mass of red knuckles—a cane so heavy that Mrs. Rook felt to wondering how so small a man ever managed to hawk about so much material in the way of spectacles and staff.

After a profound bow from the little lawyer, and a slight inclination of the head, on the part of Mrs. Rook, Blaize came forward, and client and attorney passed through the awkward formula of an introduction.

When Mr. Lambie had been relieved of his hat—he wouldn't part with his cane—by Sam, and had dropped into a chair, Mrs. Rook opened the conversation at once.

"Mr. Lambie, I wish to make it known to you, sir, that in this matter, about to be disclosed, I am not to figure."

The attorney put his tongue between his teeth, opened his mouth wide enough to expose a double row of teeth, and, although he did not utter a word, his manner said very plainly—"Certainly, madam, if it is your wish, certainly."

"I will see to it, however, that you are well paid for your trouble. And here," she said, rising and presenting him with two fifty-dollar notes, which she took from a tortoise-shell portemonnaie, "is a retaining fee."

"But, what does this matter involve?" asked Lambie, quietly pocketing the bills with a studied air of ease, as if such fees were picked up every day, and were not worthy of especial remark. "I trust there is nothing in it that could compromise the dignity of my profession."

"Nothing, sir," replied Mrs. Rook, penetrating the lawyer's mock scruples with her big black eyes. "I only ask you to vindicate the law, to have a malefactor brought to justice, to have a murderer punished."

The bland smile that was playing about the mouth of Mr. Lambie faded away instantly, and there was surprise in his voice, when he said:

"That's a grave charge, madam. I hope the evidence will bear it out. We must exercise both care and judgment, however, or we may overstep the mark."

"Exactly," rejoined Mrs. Rook; "but we must not be so chary of handling the matter, or the game, which we have now driven to covert, may escape, after all."

"Very true, madam, very true," was the response. "But, the facts; what am I expected to do?"

"Mr. Blaize, there, witnessed a murder in 1855, in Syskyou county—the murder of a husband by his wife. The guilty one fled the country and escaped the hangman."

"Well, and now?"

"And now we have discovered her whereabouts. She is in Maryland, and I have reason for wishing her brought to trial. This must be done by Mr. Blaize and yourself, and I will pay all necessary expense, and give you a fair fee."

Lambie thought the woman rather eccentric, but he felt as a professional man that, with that he had nothing to do, and so he said, crisply:

"I'm to understand, then, from all this, that I am retained for the Commonwealth, in the case of the Commonwealth vs. —"

"Laura Robart."

"Ah, yes; Commonwealth vs. Laura Robart. Evidence circumstantial or otherwise?"

"The evidence is positive," replied Mrs. Rook. "Mr. Blaize saw the deed perpetrated."

"Ah, indeed? Clear case, then. We must first go to Yreka, sue out a warrant, get a requisition from the Governor of the State, and bring defendant to this State for trial."

"I suppose that is what will have to be done."

"Yes, madam, that is the mode of procedure. Rather roundabout; going to cost something."

"I don't care for that. This woman must be brought to trial."

"Ah, yes; certainly she must. 'T would be a great pity to let her roam at large. The community is not safe while she is outside of prison walls," ejaculated Lambie. "But when do you propose starting for Yreka?"

"To-morrow morning."

"No boat until evening," put in Blaize.

"Well, then, to-morrow evening," said Mrs. Rook.

"Very good," replied Lambie. "I'll be ready."

"There is no need of me going up, of course?"

"No, madam; none in the least."

"They shook hands."

"This must remain a secret for the present," she enjoined.

"You can rely on my discretion," was Mr. Lambie's reply.

CHAPTER XXI. IN DEEP WATERS.

WHEN Laura fell at the feet of Sarah Rook, on that night, when the two women met at Robert Place, it will be remembered she uttered a sort of moan or wail. That moan reached the ear of Dr. Foster, who had snatched into the garden after Laura, and he ran forward and picked her up.

He knew from the rigidity of her features, from the half-parted lips, from the wide-staring eyes, that she had fainted, and, stooping down, he bathed his hands in the dewy grass and pressed them on her forehead.

"Laura—Mrs. Robart!" he exclaimed. "What has happened—what's wrong? Look up."

She sighed heavily; then her lips moved, and she said:

"I loved him—if I did kill him—I loved him."

These words shocked Dr. Foster terribly at first, but the next instant he smiled. "Tis but the raving of an unconscious woman," he said. "No more to be relied on, nor a whit more accurate than a dream."

He said this quite loud, and Laura's quick ear caught it faintly.

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Both novels of the highest merit and well calculated to command the attention of all who admire what is strong in drama, mysterious in plot, keen in character, adroit in narration, and of unquestionable purity of tone. No pandering in these authors, either to a sickly sentimentalism, or to an overwrought and questionable dramatization, which is the bane of too many of the writers for some of the popular weeklies.

Our Arm-Chair.

The Red Mazeppa.—The new serial which Mr. Allen commences with this issue, is well calculated to arrest attention both from the nature of its story and the unquestionable originality of its characters. We have what is intensely exciting and yet thoroughly natural—what is very mysterious and yet wholly probable—what is painfully real and oddly humorous—in every chapter—a rapid succession of events which show what sometimes can and does spring out of the wild life of the wild South-west, where barbarism and civilization are yet contending for the mastery. Mr. Allen has so familiarized himself with that life that his tales of the border read like transcripts from the field, where trail-hunting and man-hunting are pastimes, and conflicts with savage beasts and equally savage men are daily episodes. Our readers will peruse "The Red Mazeppa" with a breathless interest, and will, upon its conclusion, vote its author to be the best Romance Writer now catering for the popular press.

Bitter-sweet.—A pleasant correspondent writes: "I suppose editors are very much like other people and do not object to being praised—especially if they are well aware that they deserve it." Editors receive so many frowns and growls that an occasional compliment, by way of change, is as welcome as sunlight after a thunder-storm. An editor who is not growled at we suspect is not the best purveyor, or, indeed, the best friend to authors, for, though it is sometimes very unpleasant to say No! and especially so to tell the contributor that the contribution is not worthy of print, we still think it is the only correct mode of discharging the editorial trust. The author who can be complacent under rejection is sure to make friends with the editor; but when the author can not only be complacent but complimentary—why, the editorial chair will become a seat of roses.

Talmage's New Book.—Of the new volume from the pen of the celebrated Dr. Witt Talmage, soon to issue, the *Trade Circular* thus speaks: "The Abominations of Society has been the general subject of a series of Rev. Dr. Witt Talmage's vigorous and effective sermons at the spacious Brooklyn Tabernacle, and these, with others, will be published February 1st, under the above title, in a 16mo. of fine, large type, by Adams, Victor & Co., 95 William street. A sermon on the social evil, 'The House of the Blackness of Darkness,' is an outspoken and terrible denunciation calculated to arouse wide horror of its insidious poisonings. Other views of the times, stock-gambling, 'leprosy newspapers,' white and black lies, intemperance, 'the massacre by needle and sewing-machine,' etc., receive telling and resounding blows, but there are quieter words about 'the good time coming' as well. The writer says in his preface: 'The book is not more for young men than old. The Calabria was wrecked 'the last day out.' Nor is the book more for the men than women. The best thing that God ever made is a good woman, and the worst that the devil ever made is a bad one.' The book is sure to sell widely."—Price \$1.50.

We add: the volume is an outspoken and perfectly fearless exposure, well calculated to alarm our young men and young women especially, who are so vitally affected by these social sins and popular vices. It is in no sense a volume of sermons, for such of the subjects as the author has canvassed in the pulpit he has wholly rewritten and elaborated for this volume; while as to the great bulk of the matter this is its first utterance.

And a powerful utterance it is. Such splendor and force of expression—such vivid characterization and subtle exposition of what is insidious and covert—such pathos, tenderness, sweetness—we never have met with, in a volume of its compass. It will have an immense currency, and do a vast deal of good, we have no doubt.

THE NEIGHBOR I DISLIKE.

She comes to me, and tells me all the affairs of the neighborhood. She relates to me a story about somebody whom she strongly suspects of being dishonest, and who never pays his debts. And yet, she forgets how many pounds of tea, and sugar, and flour, she has borrowed of me, but has never remembered to return!

She remarks how mean and stingy certain persons are, and wishes the minister would give them a hint about meanness being almost akin to a sin. When I go to take tea with her, I always come home hungry, and if I help myself to more than one spoonful

of sugar, she looks at me, as though she begrudged me the same.

She wonders why persons can not keep their houses in a cleanly manner, but doesn't seem to consider it any thing out of the way to bring her dripping umbrella into my best room, or make tracks over my freshly-swept floor. If I remark on its impropriety, she hints that "some people are rather over particular."

She does not think that Mr. So-and-such will enter Heaven because he don't read the Scriptures every day; yet she will go to meeting all Sunday, and she can't remember the text, or one word of the sermon, but will give an accurate description of what every one wore there. Is she more sure of a chance in Heaven than Mr. So-and-such?

She tells me that she doesn't see how Mrs. Quiggs can get along as she does, for she considers her about as shiftless a piece of humanity as ever was invented. While my neighbor is commenting on these things, her kettle at home may be boiling over, and her husband may have come home, hungry and tired. These things in her are of course quite excusable, but a most grievous wrong in Mrs. Quiggs.

My neighbor has a horror of novels and fictitious stories, never allowing one to enter her house, believing any one who reads them will come to a bad end; yet I have known her to read with great gusto the serials of a criminal's execution, or the testimony in a divorce case.

She refuses to speak to a young man because he was heard once to swear, but thinks all deacons of her church perfection. I have known that young man to share his last dollar with one poorer than himself, and I have known one of those deacons to pass a tired traveler in the road, while he was riding in his wagon, and never asked the traveler to "hop in."

She is pleased to inform me that she considers the theater a most wicked place, although she never visited one in her life; and that actors and actresses are the most depraved of characters, when she never saw or knew one.

She was an admirer of Dickens' writings, until some persons, who professed to teach the examples of our Maker, slandered his memory, and then every work of his she immediately put into the fire!

My neighbor is so glad to get hold of a scandal that she doesn't wait to hear the whole of it, but makes up a termination to suit herself, and you may be sure it is not a very agreeable one; in fact, she gads about so much, and is forever so casting aspersions on other persons' characters, that she never seems to have time to attend to her own sins of omission and commission.

She opens my boxes, and rummages through my bureau drawers, believing I have no objections, as she is a personal friend of mine. If I go to her house, she'll eye me as though I wanted to be guilty of the same mean action, which I assuredly would scorn to do.

She always complains that she never gets time to attend to her work, when she scarcely ever is home to do it. She not only loses time herself, but makes me do the same thing.

In fact, her presence to me is far from being agreeable, but I am not rude enough to tell her so.

EVE LAWLESS.

SHORT LECTURES ON DRESS.

BY THE "FAT CONTRIBUTOR."

CANES.

It being customary to speak of wearing a cane—and I have known them worn all up on people, before now—that appendage of ornament, or use, comes very properly under the head of dress, and I shall accordingly devote a lecture to it.

The earliest Cane of which there is any record was raised by Adam, though carried by mother Eve for some little time. Abel was the first man who was made the subject of a Cane presentation. He was taken, wholly by surprise, as men are to this day, and couldn't find words in which to express himself.

Canes were first carried as a defense against the canine race, hence their name. They were of rude construction, but tough material, and were worn with the bark on. Dogs were not afraid of their bark, although entertaining a healthy dread of their bite. I would like to canine or ten dogs that infest my neighborhood.

Canes may be classified as ornamental and useful, although frequently combining the two qualities. The men who, grown prematurely old, lean the heaviest on stout hickories, in their swells days sported the tiniest of bamboos, when they went forth to bamboozle.

Shakespeare divides the life of man into seven ages. There are ages of canes as well. Close imitators of men as boys are, they take to canes very early. At first, it is a cane-cane, then they perform astonishing equestrian feats astride grandfather's walking-stick, and about the time they get into their first boots they stroll around, swinging miniature canes in imitation of their grown-up brothers. In addition to this, during their schoolboy days, they are sometimes made painfully familiar with the master's cane.

At length the boy develops into a young man, and the delicate little cane he swings as he walks, or the handle of which he sucks as he goes, the ladies from in front of cigar stores, is in keeping with his general make-up. His cane grows in size, strength and solidity as his years advance, and when we see him a wealthy and prosperous man of business, or a portly, well-fed alderman, the stout, gold-headed cane he carries is in a manner emblematic of his importance.

Old age comes, and the gold-headed cane—presented by his admiring friends—is laid aside, and a stout, unpretending hickory substituted, with the well-worn handle crooked to accommodate itself to his genty fingers.

He never goes forth now without his cane, leaning heavily upon it for support. If the different canes a man has carried during his life were preserved, they would afford no insignificant hints as to his characteristics.

Few men live their allotted term of life without being presented with, at least, one cane. Sometimes the presentation is made by an individual friend, sometimes by a body of them. If the occasion is a festive one, he celebrates it over a bottle of wine. I had rather receive a cane over a bottle of wine, than over the head.

It is a trifle risky accepting a gold-headed cane from an admiring friend. He can't resist alluding to it every time he meets you, and the allusion generally costs you "a treat." I was guilty of that indiscretion myself once. I was induced on some pre-

tense or another to drop in at a down-town saloon. I found myself surrounded by a throng of people whose business I could not surmise, until my friend stepped from their midst with a gold-headed cane, which he proceeded to present to me in the usual stereotyped form. I had to take it, of course, and of course I had to treat. It is so pleasant to have to treat a lot of people whom you never saw before and never wish to see again.

I have had no peace since. If I meet the donor on the street as I am walking with it, he says, "Hello, old fellow! I see you still keep the cane I gave you." Then he takes it out of my hand and reads the inscription in a loud tone of voice so all around can hear: "From So-and-so to So-and-so," relating the incident of its presentation, and what it cost him. No good way of getting off without treating the crowd.

Another time I am without the cane. A voice hails me from across the street: "I say, what ye done with the cane?"

It is my friend—the cane-giver. He has a party with him, and I can perceive he is telling them all about presenting me with a gold-headed cane. To hasten on without a word would make me appear in the light of a base ingrate, so I am constrained to cross the street, explain why I hadn't the infernal cane with me, and—treat.

I advise my hearers never to accept the gift of a gold-headed cane unless the donor is about to leave the country for good, or hasn't long for this world.

Foolsap Papers.

Our New Coachman.

We have a colored man named Sam—I said we, but the fact is this. Since we are in our new house, Mrs. W. convinced me that it was necessary to the dignity of the house that we have a coachman; not that we have a coach, by any means, but she hopes some day to be the owner of one a little more substantial than the one which at present is drawn—by her imagination only, Mrs. W., to the furtherance of her purpose, has of late been very economical and frugal—in the matter of my clothes—if not with hers; so extraordinarily economical, in fact, that it promises a coach and four remarkably soon, which is certainly cheering.

As Mrs. W. has taken the trouble of this little business in perspective—and I might add, all other business generally—she made the first step toward it by procuring a coachman, which is the aforesaid Sam.

I had nothing to say in regard to this arrangement, because—well, because my opinion wasn't solicited.

Sam is a sprightly young darkey, over whose head 70 years have passed, taking pretty much all his half off; but he is very picturesque, although he has one eye that won't pass muster, and he can't hear without the assistance of an ear-trumpet; but in the matter of mouth he is well provided; indeed, if mouths were money he would be extremely rich, and certainly no man would be permitted to wear such a one without a special Providence, or a permit from the legislature. It was just made to take in a whole pie without doubling up the edges, and it is provided with a fine set of gums, which you would on sight suppose it would be a great saving in the article of meat if you didn't know that it wasn't any such a thing. He only works for his board, and I have figured up his salary to be fifteen hundred dollars a year, with extras in the shape of lunches.

Sam's livery is very elaborate. The coat is elegantly patched, having so many different patches on it that it looks like a brilliant map of the United States, with each State variously and highly colored. I don't think there is anything left of the original coat except one of the arm-holes and the split in the tail.

Sam is very particular about that part of his features which is his feet. He is very particular in having his heels turned out, and as this precludes the possibility of turning his toes out, too, he is particular in having them turned in, so that it is almost impossible to follow him by his tracks as you would swear he was going the other way. He is particular in wearing one shoe which was a boot, and one slipper which was a shoe in their palmy days.

He presents a truly Oriental appearance as he walks duly behind Mrs. W., who, for sake of style, insists on following her whenever she goes out on the street, although she is constantly agitated by the unprovoked attacks of wanton urchins upon Sam, who, being a little lame in his gait, has to make great exertions to keep up with Mrs. W., who, as a general thing, goes in a great hurry, as I have heard people remark while picking themselves up from the sidewalk after not getting out of her way quick enough.

The boys step on his heels, and it interferes a good deal with his progress, when he cries out:

"Look yar, don't let me done have to told you to git off a dot ar heels no mo' now," and Mrs. W. counter-marches in high state and the boys scatter.

What Sam's other name is or was, he doesn't know himself, but I am disposed to think that he never had any having been started out into the world with only Sam—nothing more, (he swears it is not Samuel, but Sam), and left to win a name the best way he might, and never having succeeded.

The vigor of Sam's taste for enlivening beverages is extremely youthful, and he is always hungry for a drink of whisky on the sly. Sometimes he loses the change when sent on an errand to the grocery, but on such occasions he always returns pretty full, which Mrs. W. instantly detects, when she sobers him off with a broomstick in a way which awakens my deepest sympathies for him.

He is of not much value about the house in dollars and cents, but Mrs. W. has succeeded in assuring me that no well-regulated first-class family would amount to any thing if they did not have a coachman to keep up the respectability of the establishment, which I could not dispute—for various reasons.

Mrs. W., who has an artistic turn, has adopted the American Eagle as the Whitehorn coat of arms, and the same she worked in worsted on the front of Sam's plug hat, which being too high she cut off and telescoped. On looking at the work of art I was rash enough to try and show her the palpable difference which should be between an eagle and the bird called the goose, when I had occasion to go down stairs without the exertion of walking.

Yours, reverently,
WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unusable MSS. promptly returned, only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—Book MSS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book MS., and be sent in envelopes with postage, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases no return first upon merit or fitness; second, upon suitability of MS. as "copy," third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. The Commercial Note sheet paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving of each page 10 lines, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unsuitable to us are wellworthy of use—all experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Can not make use of "Ride for Life," "Our Boys," "Taking in Work," "Rip Van Winkle," "How Pete Roberts," etc.; "Ladies' Fa-Yore," three poems by J. B. B.; "The Boatman," "Promises Broken," two Romances, "The Light-house Signal," "Jacoby's Girl," "After a Hoyden," "Melrose Abbey," "A Lover's Sentence," "Nix," "A Nine Days' Comed," "Pretty Good for John," "The Honey Man."

Will find place for "Truth in Love," "A Heart Echo," "Brahma," "Truth Restless"—all of which are above the average of the "best" paper poetry; "Two Monarchs," "Lines," "Pete's Pence," "Three Bells," "The Great Goose," "Miner's Mound," "Miner's Hood."

The contributions by Miss M. L. M. we retain subject to call or order, as she requests. They are not up to our standard in originality and spirit of narrative.

H. G. S. We like candor; but, as Davy Crockett says, "be sure you're right before you go ahead." We have not refused but have accepted the contribution!

Fox, St. Paul. Of course it is proper to take needful exercise at any time. And of course it is not "charitatory" to announce to sell goods at cost, if you really do so you promise.

A Subscriber. The MSS. of MS. remittances by steamers occasioned the comparative brevity of early installments of "Tracked to Death." We are now, however, able to give liberal installments, and shall do so to the end.

PURDING HEAD. Dip a sperm candle in the starch before starching the clothes to give them a gloss. Learn a trade by all means. The day is not distant when to be a good mechanic will be far more to a man's credit than to be a clerk.

ORGANIST. We don't know. All good choirs have boys and young men for the tenor and soprano.

Boy. We know of nothing which can remove scars. A cicatrix of any kind is only avoidable in the process of healing a wound or sore.

MAX J. New York city has not more Roman Catholic churches than Protestant. On the contrary, the combined Protestant churches exceed the Catholic in number as six to one. As for instance: the city contains 100 Roman Catholic churches; seventy Episcopalians; fifty-five Presbyterian; forty Methodist; twenty-six Jewish, etc. About the same proportion exists in the other leading cities, save in New Orleans. Therefore the talk about "Roman domination" is absurd.

T. W. M. We shall not republish "The Ace of Spades" in book form.

J. J. J. There are several cheap Manuals of Billiard Playing. One by Routledge, is both cheap and good. Apply to American News Company.

A. Gibbs, Washington. The poems, "Venus and Psyche," and "The Inferno," are by William Morris, and constitute a portion of his "Earthly Paradise," Vol. I.

S. S. Thank you; we can do a great deal better. We prefer hunters who are not "hot up," for the occasion only, and savages that are not caricatures. Our authors, who know what life on the Plains is, would scarcely risk the reputation of giving the introduction of kid gloves, hat brushes and a first-class kitchen as accessories of a far West romance.

EFFIE ROSEVELT. Trim your hat with any style of flowers; all kinds are equally admissible.

WARD DICKSON. Monographs are as fashionable this season as ever, and are likely to continue so; pale green is the tint most used for note paper.

ROSA ADAMS. Very long trains are decidedly stylish and on regle with the fashion, but the women in the street, are badly out of place, and may be denominated "street-sweeps."

BREIT PRIEST. "The German" is a dance that of late years has become very popular in the "society" of Europe and America. It has a leader whose movements are followed by the other dancers, and, when skillfully gone through, is one of the most graceful of the Polka-mazurka dances; but—but—

WALTER DENISON. The poem you refer to we have never seen; the following lines are no doubt the ones spoken of by your correspondent, and have been written by the brother of General Arnold, after that officer proved false to his country and his flag:

"Born for a curse to virtue and mankind,
Earth's broadest realm can't show so black a mind.
Ugly as hell, and vile as any fiend,
Each one so great 'twould gladden his side,
Indignant, your cursed name I denounce,
In all the glare each infamy can give;
Curse of ages shall attend your name,
Treason alone will glory in your shame,
Nature looks back with contumelious
On those who feign to be her own name,
Let hell receive you, riveted in chains,
Doomed to the bottom of the infernal flames."

MARY ADAMS. Decollete dresses are worn now at dinner parties, the opera, balls and entertainments of different kinds. It is a very becoming style of dress to those ladies who have good shoulders, but when dresses are cut *tres decollete*, it is an insult to good breeding and modesty.

KATE SHERIDAN. It is difficult to give you rules for "catching a husband." Any woman, no matter how homely she may be, who has true womanly instincts and a pure heart, will find some man to love her in the world, and who will love her for his wife. We can, however, give an old recipe to men for the choice of a wife. It is as follows:

As much of beauty as preserves affection,
Or modest difference of dress as distinction;
A docile mind, obedient to correction,
Unleashed by reason and not by passion;
And every passion kept in due subjection;
Just find the man, and then make your selection.

Our "progressivists" may alter to suit their taste!

MORDECAI. The celebrated African explorer, Dr. Livingston, left England in 1850 for Africa. He has been heard from several times, and has entered upon his adventurous wanderings into the interior of that wild country, but nothing very definite has been heard from him for some time, and it is feared by many that he is dead. The expedition now penetrating the country beyond Lake Nyazuni is to ascertain his fate.

MOLLIE F. G. Coral jewelry, like diamonds and pearls, is always fashionable. This season, however, older ladies are leaving coral sets mostly as "style" for young girls.

CANDOR LARY. You ask if "gambling is really prevalent among the women of New York?" There are certain classes of women in New York, as in other cities, who are given to gambling; but, that there are ladies in the metropolis addicted to the abominable practice of visiting gambling houses, is a gross slander against our fair citizens. There are "black sheep in every flock," and New York being the largest American city, and thoroughly cosmopolitan, must bear the brunt of many evils that it does not possess. Of women gambling-houses we certainly have none.

JOSIE CARLETON. High heels are especially injurious to ladies. The cuts of high heels, seen in the fashion plates of magazines, are not exaggerated, and in fact are hardly the requisite height worn by some young ladies for "style," said young ladies forget that their stylish high heels, if shoes may physically injure them for life, that they destroy the grace of their walk, and make them

"As they hobble along, a contemptuous sight,
To all but those who deck their feet in light,
Not far in the future, their practice, all right
For diseases of spine, and other ailments, will be right."

MISS HICKS. It is in Germany that each precious stone is invested with some symbolic meaning. There also every month of the year is said to be under the influence of one of these precious stones, and as it may be interesting for you to know the stone which influences each month, we append the following: January, Garnet; February, Amethyst; March, Bloodstone; April, Sapphire; May, Emerald; June, Agate; Long life and health; July, Ruby; Oblivion of grief; August, Sardonyx; Conjugial fidelity; September, Crystal; Preservation from folly; October, Aqua Marine; Misfortune, and also Opal; Hope; November, Topaz; Friendship; December, Turquoise; Success.

W. C. FOND. If you desire to develop your muscles and add strength to your body, thereby improving your health, a series of lessons in a gymnasium will be the most beneficial for the purpose.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

BLOWING BUBBLES.

BY MALCOLM TAYLOR, JR.

A-weary with playing
Out in the cold street,
The frolicsome Freddie
Who knows not a seat,
Makes mamma get something
To keep her boy stilled,
A tiny pipe and tumbler
With soap-water filled.
So, soon in his glory,
With breath soft and slow,
Are Freddie's cheeks swelling,
Bright bubbles to blow;
Up, high to the ceiling,
A transparent ball,
Each rises so airy,
Or faintly does fall.
So round and so radiant,
Each rich rainbow hue,
Their surface reflecting
Red, green, orange, blue;
But, just for a moment,
Their filmy forms stay,
Till at the touch bursting,
They vanish away.
Ah! many men thoughtful
Their heads do bow down,
Fair lines of the promised arch
Brightly to show;
But when fullest floating,
A touch does each break,
And leaves him with nothing,
Or new ones to make.

Tracked to Death:
THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCHER,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SMOOTH-BORE BULLET.

CHARLES CLANCY missing had been the mystery of the morning. This, while there were hopes of his being alive. Now that these hopes were no more—that all believed him to be dead—most of them feeling quite certain of it—as great, if not greater, mystery was, that his body was missing. Indeed, no one doubted his death, nor that it had been brought about by violence—that he had been killed. The sign was sufficient evidence. The blood upon the ground—there was a pool of it, or had been before it became congealed—seemed enough to have emptied the veins of any ordinary man. It was scarcely possible that a body so depleted could still be alive. Besides, no living man would have so left his hat and gun behind him.

And yet, if dead, what had become of the corpse? An equal mystery. If carried away, why had these things been left? Who could have carried it away? Wherefore, and whether? And for what reason surreptitiously? An accumulation of mysteries!

Puzzled, confused, almost awed by them, the searchers at length left the ground. Not, however, until after giving it that sort of investigation that satisfies the instincts of a crowd. They had spent most part of a day in this, without thinking of aught else, not even of their dinners. But night was approaching; they had grown hungry; and one after another hurried toward their homes; at first in odd individuals, then in straggling groups, the movement at length extending to the main body of those who composed the searchers. They went home, determined to return on the following day, and, if necessary, renew the search.

Only two men stayed—Simoon Woodley and a companion, a young backwoodsman—like himself, a professional hunter.

"I'm darned glad they're gone off," said Woodley, as soon as the two were left alone. "Dan Boone himself couldn't take up a track 'til such a noisy clamor 'round 'em. I've tuk notice o' somethin' Ned, the which I didn't deem to make known while they war about—specially while Dick Darke war on the ground. Let's go now, and see if there's any thing to be made out o' it."

The young hunter, whose name was Heywood—Edward Heywood—simply made sign of assent, and followed his elder confederate.

After walking about two hundred yards through the forest, Woodley made a stop beside a cypress "knee," with his face toward it, and his eyes fixed upon a spot nearly on a level with his chin. It was one of the largest of these singular vegetable excrescences that perplex the botanist.

"You see that, Ned?" said the old hunter, at the same time extending his finger to point out something near the summit of the "knee."

The last Heywood did not need. His eyes were already on the object.

"I see a bullet-hole, sure; and something red around the edge of it. Looks like blood."

"It ain't blood, an' nothin' else. It's a bullet-hole, too; and the bit o' lead lodged in 'tar has fast passed through some critter's flesh. Else why shud that 'a been blood up on it? Let's dig it out, and see what we kin make o' it."

Woodley took a knife from his pocket, and, springing open the blade, inserted it into the bark of the cypress, close to the bullet-hole. He did this dexterously and with caution, taking care not to touch the encrusted surface of the ball had made, or in any way alter its appearance. Making a circular incision around, and gradually deepening it, he at length extracted the piece of lead from the tree with the wood in which it was imbedded. He knew there was a gun-bullet inside. The point of his knife-blade told him so. He had probed the hole before commencing to cut it out.

Weighing the piece of wood in his hand, and then passing it into that of his companion, he said:

"Ned, this here chunk o' timber's got a bullet inside o' it that niver kin out o' any rifle. That's big ends o' an ounce-weight of it. Only a smooth-bore ked 'a discharged such a lot o' lead."

"You're right there," answered Heywood, in like manner testing the ponderosity of the piece. "It's the ball of a smooth-bore, no doubt o' it."

"Well, then, who carries a smooth-bore through these woods? Who, Ned Heywood?"

"I know only one man who does it."

"Name him! Name the durn rascal!"

"Dick Darke."

"Ye may drink afore me, Ned. That's the skunk I war a-thinkin' 'bout, an' hev been all the day. I see'd other sign beside this, the which escaped the eyes o' the rest. An' I'm gied it did, for I didn't want Dick Darke to be about when I war follerin' it up. For that reason I drawed the people aside; so as none o' 'em shud notice it. By good luck they didn't."

"What other sign have you seen?"

"Tracks in the mud close in by the edge of the swamp. They're a good bit from the place whar the poor young fellow hez gone down, an' makin' away from it. I jest got a glimpse at them, an' I ked see they'd been made by a man runnin'. I'll bet my head on't they war made by a pair o' boots I've seen Dick Darke wearin'. It's too gloom-some now to make anythin' out o' them. So let's you an' me go by ourselves in the mornin' at the earliest o' daybreak, afore the people get about. Then we kin give them tracks a thorror scrutination. If they don't prove to be Dick Darke's, then call Sime Woodley a thick-headed woodchuck."

"How shall we know them? If we only had his boots, so that we might compare them."

"If! That's no if. We shall hev his boots—bound to 'em."

"But how are we to get 'em?"

"Leave that to me. I've tho't o' a plan to git persussion of the skunk's futwear an' everythin' else belongin' to him that kin throw light on this dark bizness. Come, Ned, let's go now to the widder's house an' see if we kin say a word o' comfort to the poor lady, for a lady she air. Belike enough this thing'll be her death-blow. She war't strong at best, an' she's been a deal weaker since the husban' died. Now the son's good too. Come on, Heywood. Let's show her she ain't forsook by everbody."

"I'm with you, Woodley!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING.

To the mother of Charles Clancy it was a day of terrible suspense while they were abroad searching for her son. Far more fearful the night after they had returned—not without tidings of the missing man. Such tidings! The too certain assurance of his death—of his having been assassinated, with no trace of the assassin—no clue to the whereabouts of his body.

The mother's grief, hitherto kept in check by a still lingering hope, now escaped all bounds, and became truly agonizing. Her heart seemed broken; if not, surely was it breaking. Although, in her poverty, without many friends, she was not left alone in her sorrow. It could not be so in the far South-west. Several of her neighbors—rough backwoodsmen though they were—having kind hearts under their coarse homespun, determined to stay with her all night.

They remained outside in the porch, smoking their pipes, and discussing the events of the day, and the mystery of the murder.

At first they talked cautiously, two and two, and only in whispers. These gradually became mutterings pronounced in louder tone; while the name of Richard Darke could be heard frequently. He, of course, was not among the men remaining in the widow Clancy's cottage.

Soon the conversation grew general, those who took part in it expressing themselves more openly; until, at length, Dick Darke—as, for short, his neighbors called him—became the sole topic of their discourse.

His behavior during the day had not escaped their notice. Even the most stolid among them had observed a strangeness in it. By his counterfeited zeal he had overdone himself. The sharpest of the overdone only saw this; but all were more or less struck with something besides surprise—suspicion, in short—when they saw the dog turn upon and bark at him. What could that mean?

Just as one had put this interrogatory, and answers or surmises were being offered, the same dog—the hound—was again giving tongue. The animal had sprung out from the porch and commenced barking, as if some person was making approach to the house. Almost simultaneously the little wicket gate in front was heard turning on its hinges.

A hired negro boy, who was attached to the establishment, quieted the dog; and then spoke to the party who had lifted the gate latch. Only a few muttered words were exchanged. Then the boy returned to the house; two men following close upon his heels. They were Simoon Woodley and Ned Heywood.

The others, recognizing, rose to receive them, and the two hunters became part of the concourse which was still discussing the events of the day.

Woodley—looked up to by all as the man most likely to throw light on the series of mysteries perplexing them—soon became the chief speaker; the rest hearkening to him as if he were an oracle.

There was no loud talking done. On the contrary, the discussion was carried on in a low tone—at times almost in whispers—the little group permitted to take part in it, keeping their heads close together, so that the women and domestics should not hear what was said.

They who thus deliberated were in darkness. At least there was no light in the porch where they sat, except what came from the occasional flash of a candle carried across the corridor from room to room. When this flashed over their faces, it showed there, upon one and all of them, an expression different from that likely to be called forth by an ordinary conversation. Eyes could be seen sparkling with a passion, as of anger, ill held in restraint; lips tightly pressed upon teeth that seemed set determinedly on some purpose wanting only an additional word to give it the cue for action.

The same candle's gleam revealed the form of Simoon Woodley in the center of the group, holding in his hand an object that, without being told what it was, no one could have guessed. They to whom he was exhibiting it knew well. It was a piece of cypress wood, inside which was the bullet of a gun. They had received full explanations as to how the ball had been found thus buried, and saw the blood-tinge around the orifice it had made on entering? In short, they had been made aware of every thing already known to the two hunters.

Other circumstances were stated and discussed; and to a select few Woodley communicated his discovery of the footprints, as also his conjecture about the boots that would correspond to them.

How he was to confirm this to himself, and prove it to the others, was also made known to this same select few, who, shortly after, mounting their horses, rode away from the house, leaving enough friends to stay by the sorrowing mother—at least to keep her company, if they could not comfort her in her affliction.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SLEEP OF THE ASSASSIN.

The night after Clancy's assassination, Richard Darke did not sleep soundly. He

scarce slept at all. Two causes kept him awake—the weight of guilt upon his soul, and the sting of scornful words yet ringing in his ear—these last uttered by the woman he so wildly loved.

Either should have been sufficient to torture him, and did—the last more than the first. He had little remorse for having killed the man, but great chagrin at having killed the woman. The slight he had contributed to the crime, making the latter less repented of. Had it served its purpose there would have been no thought of repentance. But it had not. He had done a murder, and made nothing out of it. For this reason only did he regret what he had done.

In his half-waking, half-dreaming slumbers, he fancied he could hear the howling of a hound. It awoke him; but when awake he thought no more of it, or only with a transient apprehension. His thoughts were of Helen Armstrong—of her scorn, and his discomfiture. This was a sure thing now; and he could no longer hope. Next morning she would be gone from him forever.

A steambot, leaving Natchez at the earliest hour of day, would convey Colonel Armstrong, with all his belongings, far away from the place. It would know them no more; and he, Richard Darke, in all probability, would never again set eyes on the woman he loved—so madly as to have committed murder for her sake.

Why the devil did I do it?

In this course shape did he express himself, as he lay upon his couch, lightly thinking of the foul deed, but with slightly grieving how little it had availed him.

Such were his reflections on the first night after it. Far different were they on the second. Then Helen Armstrong was no more in his thoughts, or only having a secondary place in them. Then the howls of the hound were heard, or fancied, more frequently. They did not startle him from his sleep, for he slept not at all. All night long he lay thinking of his crime, or rather of the peril in which it had placed him.

The events of the day had given him a clearer comprehension of things; and he now knew he was in danger. No one had said any thing, to tell him that suspicion was directed upon him. Still there was the circumstance which might be known, that he and Clancy had both been aspirants to the hand of Helen Armstrong. He did not think it was known. He hoped not, as their rivalry would point to a probable motive for the murder. For all this he feared it.

He reviewed his own conduct throughout the day. During the search and in the presence of the searchers, he had borne himself satisfactorily. He had taken an active part, counterfeiting surprise, zeal, and sorrow equal to that felt by any of the party—indeed, greater. It was the worst thing he could have done, since it had attracted observation. Though he had not noticed it, eyes were upon him, keenly bent, watching his every movement, and ears listening to every speech he uttered. There had been no change in his countenance that was not noted; and comments made upon it—behind his back. As he had not heard them, he felt secure—though far from confidently so. He was only confident of there being no evidence, except what might be called circumstantial; and this only slight. For all he had at times during the day come very near convulsive trembling. Not from any remorse of conscience, but a cold shiver that crept over him as he approached the spot where the deed had been done. And when he at length stood upon it, under the somber shadow of the cypress, among the moss with which he had shrouded the corpse—when he saw that it was no longer there—his fear was intensified. It became awe—dread, mysterious awe. Sure of having there left a dead body—the only one sure of this—what had become of it? Had the dead come to life again? Had Charles Clancy, shot through the breast—he had noted the place by the blood gushing from it as he held the picture before his victim's face—could Clancy have again risen to his feet? Could a man, having his body bored by a three-quarter-ounce ball, and laid prostrate along the creek, ever get up again? Was it possible for him to survive?

As the murderer put these questions to himself, on the spot where the murder had been committed, no wonder he felt awed, as well as mystified—no wonder his features showed a strange expression—one so peculiar as to have attracted attention. They who noticed it, however, had said nothing—at least, in his presence.

The dog had not been so reticent. As we have said, the dumb brute seemed also to take note of his weird, wild look, and had repeatedly barked at him.

Darke had preserved sufficient presence of mind to explain this to the searching party, telling them he had once occurred the hound while out hunting with his friend Clancy, and that ever since the animal had shewn anger with him.

The tale was plausible. For all that, it did not deceive those to whom he told it. Some of them drew deductions from it still more unfavorable to the teller.

But if the mystery of the missing body had troubled him during the day—in the hour when his blood was up, and his nerves strung with excitement—in the night—in the chill silent hours, as he lay tossing upon his couch—it horrified him more than awe—it horrified him. In vain he tried to compose himself by shaping out some explanation of the mystery. He could not comprehend it; he could not even form a probable conjecture. Was Clancy dead, or still living? Had he walked away from the ground? Or been carried from it, a corpse?

In either case the danger to him, Darke, would be almost equal. Better, indeed, if Clancy were dead; for then there would be but the circumstantial evidence against his assassin. If alive, he could himself give testimony of the attempt, which, criminally, would be almost the same.

Darke hoped he was dead. The night before he felt sure of it, not so now. As he lay sleepless on his couch, struggling with distracted thoughts—with fears that appalled him—he would have given the best runaway nigger he had ever caught to be assured that Clancy was dead. And he would have granted half a score of his father's slaves their full freedom—cheerfully given it—if that could have guaranteed him against detection or punishment. He was being punished, if not through remorse of conscience, by cruel fear. He knew now how hard it is to sleep the sleep of the assassin, or lie wakeful upon a murderer's bed.

His midnight agony was easy, compared with that he was called upon to endure when the morning light came through the window of his chamber, and along with it voices. They were many and strange, all

speaking in tones of vengeance. The assassin sprung from his couch, and, rushing across the room, looked through the open casement. It did not need this to tell him what the fracas was about. His guilty heart had already guessed it. Among the half-score horsemen, who had drawn up around the house, he recognized the sheriff of the county, and beside him two others, he knew to be constables.

These three had already dismounted, and were entering the door.

In ten seconds after they were inside his sleeping-chamber; the sheriff, as he stepped across its threshold, saying, in firm, clear voice:

"Richard Darke, I arrest you!"

"For what?"

"For the murder of Charles Clancy."

CHAPTER XVII.

A SOUTH-WESTERN SHERIFF.

In an hour after Darke's arrest he was lodged in the county jail, about three miles from his father's residence.

The men who had made him prisoner took note of every circumstance attending the arrest. They searched the chamber in which he had slept—the whole house, in fact. There were few of them who owed Ephraim Darke any goodwill, but many the contrary. His accumulated wealth, used only for selfish ends, had not gained him popularity in the neighborhood. Besides, he was not a Southerner *par sang*, as most of his neighbors were. They knew him to be from the New England States; and, although there was not a bit of Abolitionist in him, but much of the opposite, still he was not liked either by planter or "poor white."

The sheriff and his party, therefore, used little ceremony in the action accompanying the arrest: ransacking the house, and examining its most sacred *arcana*. They took possession of the double-barreled gun, which Richard was in the habit of carrying, and also the suit of clothes he usually wore when out in the woods. In the coat—it was noted that this was not the same he had on during the day of the search—was found a hole that looked as if freshly made, and by a bullet. It was through the shirt, and had a torn, tattered edge.

Among the men present when he was made prisoner, were several who could read such sign, and interpret it as surely, or more surely, than an expert would identify a particular handwriting. Notably of these was the hunter Woodley. At a glance he pronounced the hole in the coat-skin to have been made by a bullet, and one that had passed through the barrel of a rifled gun.

Several others, after looking at it, confirmed what Woodley said.

The circumstance was significant, and led to renewed conjectures among the people surrounding the sheriff.

No one thought of questioning the prisoner about it—not now that he was in the hands of the law. All further formal investigation would be postponed till the trial, soon to take place. The party arresting him only busied themselves in seeking evidence to be sifted at a later period.

Besides the hole through the coat-skin the sheriff's posse found nothing else that seemed to point especially toward the crime—except the double-barreled gun. To its bore exactly fitted the bullet which the two hunters had extracted from the cypress "knee," and which was now in possession of those instructed to prosecute. Woodley, however, acting apart, and on his own account, had discovered a pair of boots, heavily laden with mud, hidden away under a heap of rubbish at the bottom of Darke's peach-orchard. The old hunter had surreptitiously kept these to himself, intending to make private and particular use of them; his comrade, Heywood, being alone privy to the secret of their discovery.

Having finished their investigation of the premises, the sheriff's party hurried their prisoner off to the county town, leaving his father behind in a state of terrible howling, lament, half crying, half crazily cursing.

Most of the men hitherto following the chief officer of the law, parted with him at the plantation-gate. He and his constables were thought enough to keep charge of the accused. A sheriff in the South-western States is a very different sort of individual from the men who perform the duties of this office in the North, or the grand dignitaries, with scarce any duties at all, in a shire of England. The sheriff of the backwoods must be a man of courage—often of desperate courage—else the mandates intrusted to him would result in a failure of justice, and a mockery of the executive power. It is rarely that they do—rare, indeed, when a Mississippian sheriff proves recreant to his trust. Far more common to find him ready to die, or at least risk death, in the performance of his dangerous duty; and not unfrequently this the actual result.

While traveling through the South-western States I have often witnessed, admired as well, the wonderful self-sacrificing courage of these responsible officers of the law. Who could help admiring it?

Therefore, the party who had been with the sheriff, assisting in the arrest, saw no necessity for following him any further. They had full confidence that he would deposit his prisoner within the walls of the county jail; and parting from him and his constables, as said, at Darke's plantation gate, they turned off in a different direction.

Whether or not the murderer had been discovered—not of this he believed he was; they had yet to search for the body of the murdered man.

Again, as on the day before, they separated into several parties, each taking a tract of the woods, though all keeping in the neighborhood where blood had been spilled, and Clancy's gun and hat had been found.

But their search proved as fruitless as on the preceding day. More so, since on the second scouring of the woods nothing new was discovered that could throw additional light upon the perpetration of the crime, or aid them in recovering the corpse.

Again they dragged and poled the creek up and down, penetrating the swamp as far as was possible, or likely that a dead body could have been carried for concealment. In its deep, dark recesses they found no trace of man, either living or dead; only the solitude-loving crane, the snake-bird, and the scaly alligator.

It was but a poor report to take back to the plantations—a sad one for the mother of the missing man.

She never received it. Before the returning searchers could speak the unsatisfactory intelligence into her ear, Mrs. Clancy lay cold in death.

The long-endured agony of ill-fortune, the more recent one of widowhood, and now this new bereavement of a lost only son—

for she fully believed him lost, basely assassinated—this accumulated anguish was too much for her woman's strength, of late fast failing; and when the neighbors got back, clustering around her dwelling, they could hear sounds within, that told of some disaster.

On the night before they had heard the same; but now the tone was different. Then the widow's voice was lifted in lamentation; now it was not heard at all.

Whatever of mystery there might be, it soon received elucidation.

A woman, coming out upon the porch, and raising her hand in token of silence, said, in sad, solemn voice:

"Mrs. Clancy is dead!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 97.)

The Red Rajah:

OR,

THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIES.

A TALE OF THE MALAYAL ISLES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.

(LAUNCE PONTREZ.)

AUTHOR OF "MUSTANG HUNTERS," "KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "THE GRIZZLY HUNTERS," "THE BLACK WIZARD,"

CHAPTER XXVI.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP.

CAPTAIN PENDLETON shouted angrily to "load up and try another shot," when Claude interferred.

"Heavens, Pendleton!" he cried; "don't you see who is on board? It is Mademoiselle de Favannes! You may kill her if you fire."

Pendleton acquiesced in the observation. "Avast there with that gun!" he ordered. "Secure the piece."

Then he and Claude consulted on what should be done. The ship was increasing her distance every minute from the yacht, and it became quite plain that by the time they had rounded the reef that intervened between them, the "Bonita" would be out of sight.

"We must let her go," said Claude, assentingly, to the other's propositions. "We must go to the island of the ransom, and see if the fellows have performed their promise of returning the prisoners."

So the two friends sadly descended the rigging, and passed the rest of the day in beading up to Ransom Island. They arrived there about sunset, and found that the ubiquitous Rajah had been there, as they had expected. A small tent was pitched on the barren rocks, and around it were grouped the unhappy merchants, who had been captured by the Red Rajah. They were well provided with food and water, and otherwise had been well treated, but they were full of indignation and terror.

Claude sympathized with them all, and especially with Messrs. Blathers and Skinner, each of whom had his head tied up, where his right ear had been cut off by the Rajah's orders, to expedite the ransom. Mr. Earle was uninjured, as also his daughter, Julia, whom they discovered, somewhat to Peyton's surprise, with her father. Claude had never expected that the sanguinary pirate would have spared her.

But he had done so, and the Earles had a strange tale to tell.

"They had been carried away," Julia said, "to the creek that divides Singapore from the wild jungle mainland. Here they found a fleet of twelve prahus, similar to the Bonita, Don Gregorio's yacht. Where these prahus had been hidden during the Rajah's visit was a mystery, but probably in one of the numerous wild creeks in the neighborhood. At all events they were put on board one of the prahus, along with Mademoiselle Marguerite, who would not leave Julia. They sailed away around the island quite openly, without seeming to attract any attention, and outside the harbor were joined by the Bonita, which came out to meet them from her moorings. They were unmolested from the forts, the garrisons of which probably took them for Malay traders."

"Julia, her father, and Marguerite, were compelled to follow the Rajah on board the Bonita, and were treated with the utmost politeness. They sailed away to the northwest, and next morning found themselves all alone in the sea. The prahu that followed had disappeared."

"They sailed on for the whole of the next day, and at night sighted some islands, which they passed, and next day were in the midst of the Bay of Bengal, or the North Indian Ocean. They must have gone at a tremendous pace, for on the fourth day they were in sight of Pondicherry, a distance of over twelve hundred miles from Singapore."

"During the passage," Julia said, "the Rajah and Marguerite rarely conversed. She seemed to be angry at him, and sullen and reserved. It appeared that Marguerite had begged hard, at Singapore, for the Rajah to release the merchant and his daughter; but the latter had refused."

Now, when in sight of Pondicherry, the two had a violent dispute, in which they spoke only the Malay language, so that Julia could not understand them. At last the girl ran to the side of the vessel, and actually leaped overboard. What happened afterward was all confusion. The child sunk twice, and the Rajah himself leaped overboard after her. The sharks were so plentiful and voracious, that there was much difficulty in saving them, and the child was brought on board at last, apparently dead. The Rajah behaved like an insane man, tearing his hair and uttering wild ejaculations in English. At last the child opened her eyes, and the scene was very touching. The savage warrior melted into tears, and they talked together in French for some time. Julia did not catch all they said, as she was confined to her cabin by the crew at the commencement of the scene, but the Rajah appeared to be promising her something, at which she smiled, and appeared satisfied, for she put her arms round his neck and kissed him.

(Claude ground his teeth when he heard this.)

"What happened at Pondicherry I do not know," pursued Julia. "That evening we went into the port, and my father and myself were put down below, and closely confined. We were not let up on deck for two days, and when we came up at last, the Bonita was again out at sea, and it was evening. A large prahu was alongside one of the fleet we had left behind us. We were hastily transferred to it, and sailed away, in company with the Bonita. We found poor Mr. Blathers and Mr. Skinner on board. Where they took us after that, I do not

know. We sailed about, sometimes with the fleet, sometimes with the Bonita, till last night, when we heard heavy cannoning. Then they took down our sails, and we rowed all night, till they landed us here in the morning, and here you have found us."

"But when were these two gentlemen mutilated in that manner?" asked Claude, pointing to poor Skinner's head.

"The Rajah came on board one day, and ordered my father and me below, and we heard cries on deck. When we came up, we found these gentlemen had been treated as you see. They told us that they had been compelled to write letters to their partners, on the subject of their ransoms. The Rajah threatened to cut them to pieces if they did not do it.

"We were allowed to see Marguerite last night, that is to say, I was. I forgot to tell you that my maid, Surya, was with me till then, attending and dressing me, as she used to. But yesterday night she was taken from me, and sent to attend Marguerite. I found the poor child very glad to see me, and she told me that the Rajah had consented to set me free. At first, you know, he was going to establish a harem, the wretch, of which I was to be an ornament. But she had persuaded him to yield to her, and, in requital, she had promised to marry him."

Claude had a hard struggle to control himself here.

"While we were talking," continued Julia, "an old lady came into the cabin, who was introduced as Madame de Choiseul, Marguerite's aunt. She was very deaf, and asked me at once, 'Was not Monsieur le Comte a man magnificent, a man glorious?' When I answered that I did not know him, she did not hear me, but went on praising this generous count, who was to make her old age happy and marry her niece, Marguerite, and how they were to live somewhere, I could not catch where, for at that moment the chief devil came in—the Rajah. I mean, he looked like a devil for a moment. I tell you, when he saw the old lady and heard her prattle. But the next minute he was as cool and courteous as ever, and advanced to me, saying that it was time to depart. Marguerite cried, but the old lady did not seem to understand. He explained to her that I had come from another vessel, which was going back, and so I came away."

"He must have deceived Marguerite, for she evidently thought I was set free on her account. But I was not, for papa tells me that it has cost us an immense sum of money."

"How did this Rajah take leave of you?" asked Captain Pendleton at this juncture.

"With perfect politeness. He asked if the old lady had told me any thing of his future plans, but I assured him she had not, and he seemed to be satisfied. Just before he left me, which was on this island, in front of this tent, he said to me: 'You may thank the power of innocence in that child, Miss Earle, that has preserved you from harm. If it had not been for her, you would have stayed in the fleet, after your father's ransom was paid. You were not included in it. Henceforth you will hear no more of the Red Rajah. He leaves these seas forever.'"

"What does that mean, I wonder?" said Claude.

"I suppose the blackguard has determined to retire to the shades of private life," returned Pendleton. "And, indeed, if he can keep all the money he has made to himself, he will have a very respectable fortune. Well, we must be after him. The screw will be in order by to-morrow morning."

During the night the crew of the Comanche were hard at work, clearing the screw of the thick folds of canvas in which it appeared to be inextricably entangled, and finally got it clear.

Then the Earles and their companions were put on board one of the captured prahuis, to be sent to their homes at Singapore. Peyton took command of the best sailer of the lot, and bid farewell to Pendleton.

He was resolved to hunt out the Rajah, in the midst of the reefs among which the Bonita was doubtless threading her way; and with that object stood off to the east, leaving the Spice Islands in his wake.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NEWS FROM HOME.

A YEAR after the events we have described in our story, Claude Peyton found himself in Calcutta, as far from the object of his search as ever. He had cruised among all the islands of Malaysia, and far out into the Pacific Ocean, but no sign of the terrible Red Rajah had he seen, since the day when he disappeared from view, with Marguerite by his side.

Where was she now, beautiful, innocent Marguerite? Had the Rajah kept his promise and married her? and where had they gone to? They had vanished from the Eastern world as completely as if they had never been.

Heart-sick and disappointed, with a weary pain at his heart that had never left him, the young Virginian sailed back to Calcutta. He passed through the heart of the Sooloo Sea, where the pirates had once held their court, and found it covered with peaceful traders. With the exit of the Red Rajah, peace returned to the seas, except near the coasts of Borneo and Celebes, where sneaking rowboat pirates still kept their haunts, to snap up unwary fishing-boats.

Claude did not stop at Singapore. He had not the heart. He was too gloomy about Marguerite's loss. He passed through the Straits of Malacca with a fair wind, and arrived at Calcutta.

Lying in the Hoogly was a frigate, recognized at once as the Comanche. Peyton ran alongside in his weather-beaten prahu; and was soon on board, and shaking hands with his old friend Pendleton.

The two had much to talk about, Claude to narrate his fruitless expedition, Pendleton to make a confession.

"Claude, old fellow," said the captain, with something very like a blush, "I'm going to leave the service. I've sent in my resignation, and as soon as it's accepted I leave here."

"Why, where on earth are you going, Horace?" asked Peyton, surprised.

"To Singapore," said the other. "The fact is, Claude—I'm going to be married to Miss Earle—you remember her?"

"To be sure I do."

"Yes, and we're going to live in Virginia. To be sure the father is somewhat objectionable, with his absent aspirates, but we shall not see him, and the lady herself is perfection, as you know."

"I congratulate you, Horace," said Claude, cordially. "As for me, I don't know what I shall do. I've found no trace of that vil-

lain, the Rajah, and poor little Marguerite is gone forever, I fear."

"Why don't you go back to the old plantation?" asked Pendleton. "It's over four years now since you have seen the old folks; and my father writes me word that they often talk about you there. By the by, there are some letters for you, lying in the post-office here. The clerk told me that they had been there for over a month. One of them was directed to your father's handwriting."

"Indeed!" said Claude, eagerly. "Then I must go and get them at once. Good-by, Horace."

"Dine with me this evening—won't you—at six," called out the captain, as the other left the cabin.

"All right. With pleasure, I mean," if he had been shot.

He was very anxious to hear from home. Pendleton's account stirred up all the tender memories of his boyhood. He thought of his father and mother, now growing old; of his lost brother, Clarence, whom he had not seen for so many years. Had Clarence come home, perhaps? He rushed to the post-office, and found several letters. Two he knew at sight to be bankers' advices, with remittances from home. The third was in his father's well-known hand, and he tore it open with impatience.

It was short, and referred to a previous letter, which the writer presumed he had received at Singapore. The last words electrified him:

"As I told you in my last letter that your brother Clarence had returned home, and that we were reconciled, you will not be surprised to hear that his marriage is to take place at Christmas. During his travels he has accumulated great wealth, and his bride is worthy of him. Come home quickly, Claude. We all long to see you, and none more than—"

"Your affectionate father, GEORGE H. PEYTON."

Claude was astounded. His brother came home, and this the first he knew of it! How he wished he had stopped at Singapore! Then he would have understood it fully.

As it was, he had no time to lose. The steamer for Europe was going the next day, and he had only time to catch his remittances and take his passage, during the short business hours of Calcutta.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE END.

The evening was deliciously mild and fine. The winter had been remarkably open and dry so far, and the roads were very tolerable still. No snow had fallen yet, to convert them into those terrible quagmires that have given Virginia mud a world-wide reputation. The fields were brown and bare, it is true; the forests leafless; but the warm sunrays lay upon the wood-sides, and the quail piped among the stubble.

Flocks of wild ducks, high overhead, were winging their steady way southward through the blue sky, to find their rest in the distant marshes of South Carolina.

Every now and then, the distant report of a fowling-piece showed where some sportsman was at work, filling his game-bag.

Claude Peyton rode along the well-remembered road, by field and forest, his heart full of pleasant thoughts, mingled with a gentle sadness.

He was coming home. Home, with its sweet influences, was drawing nearer every moment. He should see his mother once more, and his dear old father, and that brother whom he only remembered as a boy.

Where had Clarence been all this time? and what was this mystery about him? The letter explained nothing. And what would he not have given could he but have known where Marguerite was! But she was gone from him forever. He should never see that graceful little figure again. She was lost to him, and in the clutches of a pirate, hidden away in some distant place in the East.

As he rode along, every thing seemed to recall his boyhood. There was the wood where he and Clarence used to hunt rabbits, long ago. That tall blasted tree on the hill-top was the same one whence he and Clarence had taken the young hawks from their nest. How bold and handsome Clarence was! What a high temper he had! Claude remembered, as if it were yesterday, the quarrel between Clarence and his father, twenty-two years ago, now, and how the boy had ridden away from the house in a passion, declaring he never would come back.

Old Colonel Peyton had not believed the threat, but Clarence had fulfilled it. He had been tracked as far as Baltimore, when his father grew anxious at last, and hunted for him. But the clue was lost there. Whether he had gone to sea or not, no one knew; but they surmised as much; for a slave had escaped from the port a week before, and it was rumored that a boy, answering Clarence's description, had gone in her.

When Colonel Peyton heard that, he forbade his son's name to be mentioned any more in the house. For a Peyton to be engaged in the slave-trade was a disgrace that he could not suffer. Claude had often wondered whether the rumor was true.

So the young man rode on, buried in various thoughts, till he arrived at the rounded highlands, among which the Rappahannock pursues its swift course. He drew rein at the corner of the winding road that led down to the ford, and spoke to one of the children who came out of the little cottage to stare at the strange gentleman. No one knew him.

"Who lives down at the ford there?" he asked of the eldest, a bright-looking mulatto boy of twelve.

The boy grinned all over his face.

"Dem as allus lived dere, I spec," he observed.

"And who's that?" asked Claude. "You see I'm a stranger here."

"Why, Mars Peyton, to be sure," was the reply.

"Has any one arrived to see Mr. Peyton recently?" asked Claude.

"Do no nuffin 'bout recently. Mars Clarence come home, 'bout six, seven, eleven months ago. Mars Claude expect home soon. Dar Mars Clarence, now, with his new wife, little French missy."

The sound of galloping hoofs struck Claude's ear, while the boy was speaking. The next minute a lady and gentleman on horseback swept out of a side road, that led from Fredericksburg, as Claude knew, and dashed down the road, some way ahead, toward the ford.

"Dar Mars Clarence," said the boy. Claude started violently in his saddle. There was no mistaking those two figures. He had seen them before!

Both were splendidly mounted on young

bay thoroughbreds, and rode with all the ease and grace of perfect equestrians. But the tall, lithe figure of the man, the air of haughty grace, the closely-buttoned suit of black, with the broad, shadowy gray hat, was unmistakable. The lady, too, small and slight, graceful as an antelope, with coils of black, shining hair around the little round head. Where had he seen her?

Not as she was now, in dark-brown riding-habit, with jaunty jockey cap on head.

No. As he looked, there flashed through his mind a vision of hot suns, waving palm trees, beds of tuberose and jessamine, and a figure gorgeous in cloth of gold.

He knew her in a minute. IT WAS MARGUERITE. And the other, her companion, who was it, but the pirate of the Indies, THE RED RAJAH HIMSELF!

Claude Peyton dashed in the spurs with involuntary cruelty, and galloped forward, shouting to the others to stop. The road to the ford in this place was as steep as the side of a house, figuratively speaking, and required great care in riding.

The Red Rajah and his companion were going at full speed down it, and the former turned his head to ascertain the cause of the shouting behind.

The next moment his horse tripped over a rolling stone, and came headlong down on the hard road, throwing its rider over on his head, and rolling over him.

A shriek from Marguerite, as the horse fell, and she tried to pull up.

But the wild thoroughbred, near his stable, could not be halted by those tiny hands. He carried her on, still shrieking, to the mansion below, near the ford, where he stopped, snorting and trembling, before the porch, to the terror and astonishment of the old colonel's sable household.

Claude found himself beside the fallen horseman, all in a whirl of bewilderment. From the sudden recognition to the terrible accident, hardly ten seconds had elapsed.

It came like a flash.

The haughty cavalier of a moment before lay in the midst of the hard rocky road, a stream of blood welling from his head, as it lay on a jagged stone. The lady's horse was tearing down the road below; Claude was pulling up his own animal to run to the assistance of the fallen man; and all of this happened in an instant of time.

Now the fallen horse began to struggle furiously to rise. Full of oats, and untired, he did not lie still and wait to be helped, although he had fallen with his feet up hill. He lashed out with his iron-bound hoofs, striking his stunned rider again and again.

Before Claude could rush to his aid, he had struck the fallen man four or five times, the hoofs echoing with a horrible, crashing thud, every time.

But the prostrate horseman never felt the blows. He was completely insensible.

Claude's horse ran off down the hill, and his master succeeded at last in quieting the frantic struggles of the other. He did not dare to encourage him to rise, till help came.

The poor gentleman lay with his body half under the horse, and could not be moved without great danger of his head being struck by the animal's hoofs. So Claude was compelled to hold down the horse's head to the ground, and wait for assistance.

While he did so, he examined the face of the fallen man intently.

It was the Don Gregorio he had known. That was certain. Pale and lifeless as the face was, he could not be mistaken in that. There was the same haughty outline, the same long, curving nostrils.

But if it was Don Gregorio, if it was the Red Rajah, another conviction forced itself on his unwilling mind as he gazed.

This man was his own brother, and no impostor. The longer he looked, the more certain he grew. He wondered how it was that he had never suspected it before. A great tenderness came over him, as he remembered how the Rajah had saved his life, while Claude was doing his utmost against his.

It was no mysterious superstition that had saved him. The brother had recognized the mark his own hand had traced on Claude's breast, and had given him his life. How great the provocation had been to take it, Claude could judge from his own sufferings since he had lost Marguerite.

How long he sat there, gazing at those pale features, with the dark stream of blood slowly welling from the temple, he did not know. At length—it seemed an age—he heard a confused buzz of voices approaching with many footsteps.

He was surrounded by the wondering negroes, and recognized his father at their head.

Colonel Peyton was so shocked and astounded as to be incapable of superintending the removal of the body.

"Claude! Clarence! My God! What a welcome to my boy!" was all he could ejaculate.

Claude took command with his characteristic quickness. "It is I, father," he said; "I saw him fall. Don't talk yet. We must get him out. Here, boys, one of you get on the horse's head. Quick. So. Now four of you take him by the legs. Hold on as tight as you can. He can't kick now. So. Now haul the brute off the body. Two of you take my brother under the arms, and drag him out. Quick. All together. So."

In a moment more the insensible Clarence Peyton was dragged clear of the feet of the animal, and the secret, when the negroes jumped away, and let the horse scramble to his feet.

Now Claude had time to hear and answer his father's anxious inquiries, while the little procession bore the injured man slowly down the hill to the home of his ancestors.

They went softly and mournfully along, till they were down by the ford, where the foaming river dashed violently by, over the rocky shallows. They turned then, under the grove of lofty oaks and cedars, that shaded the old house, leaving the old hill on the other side of the road.

They entered the quiet, shady dell, where the stately hall was hidden from view between its two hills, while a little purling stream ran from the spring-house in front of their door.

Slowly and sadly they bore the body up the steps, on to the broad, shady porch, that covered the front of the house.

Poor Mrs. Peyton, trembling and weeping, met them on the porch, and followed them into the room, where they laid their burden on the bed.

Small time was there for welcome to the returned one. Claude's mother sunk into his arms, weeping and moaning, while there was anxious bustle among the servants, to bring water and lint to dress the wounds. One of the men started for Culpeper at full gallop to fetch the doctor, and in the mean time every one obeyed Claude.

Accustomed to wounds and danger, he examined his brother's injuries, and found them hopeless at the first examination. The skull was not fractured, it appeared, but the hoofs of the frantic horse had beaten in the left side of his rider, breaking several ribs; and a thin stream of blood flowed from his mouth, telling of internal hemorrhage.

Marguerite was nowhere to be seen. Claude ordered all the negroes from the room and awaited his brother's return to consciousness.

"Where is Mademoiselle de Favannes?" he whispered to his mother.

Mrs. Peyton controlled her grief sufficiently to answer:

"She came in nearly distracted, poor thing. Her aunt, Madame de Choiseul, is here, and insisted on her going to her room. Poor child! She would be no use here. Oh! Claude! Claude! They were to be married to-morrow. And now my poor Clarence will die. And I had only just begun to be happy with him, and to love her."

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" "Mother, it is God's will," said Claude, softly. "You have one son left still."

"I know it, my child," she answered, weeping. "But poor Clarence had been away so long. He was like the lost sheep found again. And now I shall lose him forever."

Colonel Peyton sat by the bed, entirely overcome. He was an old man now, and unfit to bear such a shock.

Claude, watching the wounded man, saw the eyelids quiver at last.

"Hush! he wakes!"

The three clustered round the bed in great anxiety, as Clarence Peyton slowly opened his eyes.

He gazed round the room, dreamily, for a few minutes. Then his eyes fell on Claude. He smiled faintly.

"Claude," he whispered, in a low voice, "you are come at last. You know who I am now?"

"Hush!" said Claude, quietly. "You have had an accident. You must not speak till the doctor comes."

Clarence slowly raised his left hand to his brow. He took it away, bloody. His breath appeared to come in labored gasps.

"What's the matter?" he whispered.

"Where is Marguerite?"

"You came down with your horse on a stony road, and the beast trampled on you," explained Claude. "I fear you are badly hurt. We have sent for the doctor."

"Throw physic to the dogs," whispered Clarence, with a ghastly smile of pain and attempted sarcasm. "I want no doctor—I know it all now—I remember—the horse came on his head—and I on mine. But I can't—breathe. What's the matter?"

He spoke in short, abrupt sentences, gasping between them. Colonel Peyton addressed him.

"Don't try to talk, my poor boy. Don't. You'll hurt yourself, and, perhaps, kill yourself."

Clarence smiled again, a smile distorted with pain.

"Better so, perhaps," he said, faintly. "I'm—nothing—but a useless—scamp—Claude's the man—of the family."

There was a dead silence in the room for some minutes, only broken by Mrs. Peyton's sobs.

Presently the wounded man turned to Claude. His mind seemed to be perfectly clear, although to Claude's eyes, it was evident that he was sinking with terrible rapidity.

"Don't tell my father—I spared your life—spare my honor—when—I'm gone."

He spoke so low and brokenly, that no one but Claude understood him. The latter bowed his head, and answered:

"Fear not. I will keep your secret."

The dying man—for such he was now—smiled in gratitude, and whispered:

"Thanks—where's—Marguerite?"

"Go and fetch her, mother," said Claude, in a low tone, and presently the girl glided into the room, silent and fearless, keeping down her grief by a strong effort.

She started violently when she saw Claude, and for the first time realized who he was.

"Monsieur Claude!" she ejaculated.

"What? Have you met before?" asked Mrs. Peyton, surprised even at that moment.

"Yes, mother. I will tell you afterward," said Claude, hurriedly. "Don't talk about it now, please."

Clarence Peyton looked steadily at Claude and Marguerite, as they stood beside his bed.

"Marguerite," he said, in the soft French tongue he always used to her, "thou wilt soon be free, child. Thou hast tried to love me for long, but it has been a hard task. Now thou canst have thy Monsieur Claude, and you can both love each other. It is best so, child. Kiss me good-by. I'm going from thee."

Marguerite threw her arms around him in a burst of tears, and every one in the room was deeply affected. Clarence himself recovered the first, and motioned his mother to take her away.

A terrible spasm of pain contorted his features, in the midst of which a thick stream of blood burst from his lips and dyed the pillow.

Marguerite shrieked and fainted, and was drawn away from the bedside by Claude, and placed in a large chair near by.

Then he returned to wipe away the flowing tide. When it ceased, it became apparent that Clarence Peyton had not long to live. He motioned Claude to his side, and whispered a few words in his ear:

"When—I'm—gone—marry—Marguerite—were the words; 'good-by—pray for me.'"

A moment after he shuddered and stretched himself out. A second flow of crimson indicated that another blood vessel was burst, and in a moment more the soul of Clarence Peyton had gone to its long account.

Gifted with strength, beauty, and talent, beyond the average, he had made no use of them but to win himself the chieftainship of a band of barbarian pirates, only to desert them, and flee with his ill-gotten riches to the land that gave him birth. Stricken down at last by the inscrutable Providence of God, just upon the eve of the consummation of his happiness, brilliant, wicked Clarence Peyton, the accomplished Don Gregorio Rodriguez, fell on a plain road in broad daylight, and was trampled to death by his own horse.

Claude shuddered as he reflected on his ending, and reverently closed the eyes of his dead brother.

A year after he and Marguerite were married.

THE END.

The Dark Secret: The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON.

CHAPTER XXV.

OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE.

"Was ever woman in this humor wood!
Was ever woman in this humor won?
I'll have her!" SHAKESPEARE.

For some cause or other, Disbrow felt extremely anxious for the hour to come when he was to see Norma. Her manner, even more than her words, had implied that the interview betokened something serious and unusual. She had been completely transformed since he had seen her last; changed more than he had thought it possible any one could be in so brief a time; and her manner to him had been something more than reserved—it was rigidly cold. What could be the cause? Was it possible that during his absence she had contracted another attachment, and was anxious to be rid of the old one? "Too good to be true," he thought, with a sigh, as he strove to account for her agitation and coldness in some other way.

The drawing, too, trivial as the matter was, puzzled him not a little. That any one could have sketched the whole scene so accurately from merely reading a random description, he could not believe; it must have been seen, to be so faithfully depicted. Yet who was there to see it? Neither Emily Tremain nor Norma Macdonald had ever visited America, he felt certain; and who was there but himself to describe it to them? Altogether, he felt more completely mystified and puzzled than he had ever been about a small matter in all his life before.

At an early hour that evening, he presented himself at the Tremain House, and was shown by the aristocratic porter respectfully mentioned before, through a "marble hall" into the parlor, and left to his own devices, while the yellowplush gentleman went to have Miss Macdonald apprised of her visitor.

He had not long to wait. The door presently opened, and Norma entered, paler even than she was in the morning, and looking as when he had seen her last, agitated and troubled.

She scarcely looked up as he advanced to meet her, and shrunk away visibly when he led her to a sofa, and took a seat beside her. But she need not have been alarmed; had he been an archbishop, he could not have behaved with more gravity and decorum. There was very little of the ardent lover about Lord Earncliffe at that moment. His heart was far over the sea with Jacquetta in her lonely grave.

There was a brief and embarrassed silence, which the lady was the first to break.

"You were doubtless surprised, my lord," she began, in a slightly-tremulous voice, "by my somewhat strange request, and I beg—I beg—you will not be offended at what I am about to say."

This was a promising beginning. Disbrow looked at her, wondering what in the world was to follow this preface.

"Nothing you can say, Norma, will offend me," he replied, scarcely knowing what he was expected to answer to this strange address.

"I wish I could think so. Gentlemen all have a large share of native vanity—have they not?" she said, looking up for the first time with a smile.

"Really, I can't take it upon myself to say positively."

"I have heard so; and if it is true, what I have to say may wound your vanity—and for that I beg pardon beforehand."

"It is granted. Pray go on, Miss Norma; what awful death-blow is my vanity destined to receive from your fair hands?"

She dropped her eyes, and a faint color rose to her cheek.

"It is a serious matter, my lord. You remember—you can not have forgotten what is—what was destined to take place next November?"

"Do not think of it—such things happen every day. It is only the way of the world."

There was an untold depth of bitterness and sorrow in her tone. He did not dare to look at her, but leaned his head on his hand with a groan.

"You have acted as most would have done; and as wisdom is only bought by experience, I will be wiser for the future. Do not blame yourself too severely, my lord; it all does not rest on you. Others—the dead and the living have alike erred, yet I suppose they thought they were acting for the best. Let us be thankful it is no worse—we have both cause."

"Oh, Norma!"

"You have got a fortune and a title, and do not need to make a *mariage de convenance*; and I have discovered it all in time; so things are not so bad, my lord, as they might be."

"Oh, Norma! What a villain I must seem in your eyes!"

"A villain! Oh, not at all; it is a common thing enough, and habit redeems every thing. Perhaps we may both live to be thankful things have ended as they have."

"But your father, Norma?"

"My father loves me well enough to sacrifice even his long-cherished plan at my wish. I have only to say I do not wish this engagement to be fulfilled, and he will leave me as free as air."

"Norma, did you ever love me?" he asked—his man's vanity, as she rightly judged, wounded by her apparent coldness; for when men, the generous creatures! renounce the woman who has once told them she loved them, they like to think of her as pining away, and dying of a broken heart, and all that sort of thing, for their sake; and Lord Alfred Earncliffe, though an English peer, was just made of the same clay as his more pliant brethren.

"My lord," she said, with a dark, bright flash of her eye that reminded him of Jacquetta, "you have no right to ask that question!"

"Perhaps not, but I fancy there has been little love lost on your side, and that you are very glad to be rid of me."

"Ah," she said, with a half-smile, "did I not say your masculine vanity would be wounded? Confess, now, it would be balm of Gilead for you to see me shedding floods of tears, and bemoaning like a tragic heroine my hard fate."

"No, I hope I am not quite so selfish. Since we must part, I am glad you mind it so little—yes, I am!" he said, trying hard to convince himself he spoke the truth.

"Thank you! And now, my lord, let me ask you a question—do you intend remaining for the present in England?"

"Yes, I rather think so. I am tired of rambling."

"That is well. I want to go abroad and travel for a year or two on the Continent; and if you were going, I should remain where I am. So, when Mrs. Tremain and Emily leave next month, I shall go with them."

"But you are sure your father will make no objections to this overthrow of all his plans?"

"No; on the contrary, I am quite sure he will object, but I think I can persuade him to let me do as I please. One thing I dread, and that is, what the world will say. I am mortified to death to think papa made this unfortunate engagement known."

"It would be better, perhaps, had he not; but the world shall know how it is—that I am a rejected lover. I shall then have the consolation of being pitied by bright eyes and rosy lips without number."

She smiled—but her smile was as faint and cold as a moonbeam on snow, and she arose, to signify that their interview was at an end.

"You will excuse me, my lord; my head aches, and I am unable to entertain you just now. As this is probably the last time we will see each other alone, I will bid you good-by, since to-night, as betrothed lovers, we part forever."

She held out her hand. He took it in both of his, and looked sadly in her face. It was strange, now that the desire of his heart was attained, how lonely and grieved he felt.

"It is a hard word to say, Norma, and harder still to think you and I must henceforth meet as strangers."

"You may meet so to-night. To-morrow you will rejoice."

"Well, be it so. Farewell, Norma."

"Adieu, my lord."

"Oh, Norma! not that. Say Alfred, as you used to, 'lang syne.'"

"Good-by, Alfred. Heaven send you some one you can love, and who will love you."

"A wish, Norma, that will never be fulfilled; but I thank you all the same. And so—"

He shook hands, and, with a last look at the pale, fair, and tall, graceful figure, he turned, and left her alone.

And so was broken the tie that was to bind those two through life.

It was in a strange state of mind Lord Earncliffe hurried along to rejoin his friend. Pleasure and regret, and a strange, morbid feeling were at war within, and when he entered the room where Lord Austrey lay stretched on a sofa, collecting himself with a cigar and the last *Punch*, he flung himself into a chair, and looked half moodily at the nonchalant young lord.

"Well, my beloved Damon, what news? What terrific mystery of iniquity has been brought to light? In what state of mind did you leave her peerless highness, Princess Norma?"

"Hadt't you better go on with the catechism? Ask a few more questions before you stop. What is the chief end of man? What do the Scriptures principally teach? Go on, why don't you?"

"Pshaw! what was this mysterious interview all about? If the question is impertinent, don't answer it!"

"Oh, I will answer it readily enough! It is something you will be very glad to hear. Her peerless highness has rejected the slave, and you behold before you a discarded suitor."

Lord Austrey half rose, and took his cigar between his finger and thumb.

"Eh? What? Just say that again, will you?"

Disbrowe laughed.

"I am discarded, rejected, refused, jilted! Is that plain enough to suit your limited capacity, my young friend?"

Up sprang Lord Austrey to his feet, and, flinging away his cigar, he stretched out his arm, and putting on that enthusiastic expression all Othello wear, exultingly cried:

"Excellent wench! perdition catch my soul! But I do love thee; and when I love thee not, Chaos is come again!"

What's the rest, Earncliffe? I haven't seen Othello played lately. Deuce take that cigar! I have burned my fingers."

"What a loss you are to the stage, Austrey! If Nature had not made you a British peer, you would have been a treasure beyond price, to do the high-tragedy business. Have you ever turned your thoughts to the stage as the means of earning an honest living?"

"Bah! don't talk nonsense! I want to hear all the particulars. Are you really, and truly, and seriously jilted?"

"I really, and truly, and seriously am!"

"Good! Fate has turned the cold shoulder to me ever since I was old enough to know the lady; but I felt sure she would smile at last. And she has, you see. Norma's mine!"

"Don't be too sure. She may serve you as she has me."

"No fear. The little Macdonald has better taste. But what reason did the damsel give?"

"None at all, except that I did not love her—and, faith! she hit the right thing in the middle just then. And so the engagement was broken, now and forever. I felt about three inches high at the time, I can tell you!"

"Te Deum! What a slice of good luck for George of Austrey! What is papa going to say about it?"

"Oh! she has promised to make it all right there. She will bring him to view matters in their proper light, she says. She goes abroad with the Tremains next month."

"Better and better! I'll be an *attache* of that embassy, or know for why. I never was properly thankful before that my maternal ancestor and Mrs. Tremain were twenty-second cousins, or something; but it just suits me exactly now! Won't I console our pretty Norma on the way! 'Make hay while the sun shines'; there's nothing like it," cried Lord George, in a hazy recollection of some proverb.

"Well, I hope you'll be successful, of course," said Disbrowe, feeling dreadfully hypocritical; for he was amazed, he could scarcely tell why, by his friend's resolution of success.

"Successful! Of course I will. There is no time when a girl is more disposed to smile on a new lover than after she has discarded an old one; and, ahem! a Lord George Austrey is well worth smiling at every day. I flatter myself. So, when Norma comes back to England, you may be ready with your congratulations, my Lord of Guilford and Earncliffe."

CHAPTER XXV.

A SECRET SORROW.

"I have a secret sorrow here—
A grief I'll ne'er impart;
It heaves no sigh—it sheds no tear,
But it consumes the heart."

THREE days after, Lord Earncliffe went back to Disbrowe Park, leaving his friend in London—a constant visitor at Tremain House. Whatever Miss Macdonald felt, she had enough of the pride of Albion's stately daughters to conceal; and she rode, and walked, and drove, and went to the theater and the opera nightly; and Lord Austrey was always of their party. His distant relationship to the Tremains stood him in good stead now, and he took care not to be too particular in his attentions, but to be quite as devoted to Emily Tremain as to Norma Macdonald. He left it to time to ripen their acquaintance to a warmer feeling. And Lord George acted wisely. A handsome face and figure, and gallant bearing, seldom fail to please ladies; and Lord George could be agreeable, not to say fascinating even, when he chose. Miss Macdonald might have the bad taste to be insensible to his manifold attractions just at present, while the wound her first love had received was still rankling; but there was a good time coming, and Lord George, being none of your fiery mad-headed lovers, was quite content to wait, and console himself with the maxim: "*Mieux vaut tard que jamais*."

And at the end of the month, having given himself an invitation to join their party, which Emily Tremain—who called him "Cousin George," and considered him delightful—had warmly seconded, they all set off together for France. Norma, too, was not displeased at this new acquisition to their party; for Lord George was an unfailing antidote against *ennui* and depression of spirits, keeping Emily Tremain especially, who had a strong natural taste for the ludicrous, in fits of laughter continually.

Just before starting, Lord George sent an epistle, rather of the short and sweet order, to his friend, to announce his success.

"My DEAR ALF:—We are off to-morrow will find us en route for Paris. The battle is won! Norma is mine, as certainly as if she was signed, sealed, and delivered! What a superb beauty it is—*na belle reine*! Ah, Earncliffe, you don't know what you have lost! But one man's loss is another man's gain; and so *benedicite*!"

Lord Earncliffe read it, as he lay slipped and dressing-gowned in his room, *ennuyé* nearly to death, and an expression, half-angry, half-contemptuous, came over his face. How little she must ever have loved him to forget him so soon!

A life of inaction, of stagnation, was little suited to the gay, volatile nature of Alfred Disbrowe; yet some perverse spirit seemed to possess him now, and hold him in chains at Disbrowe Park. He scarce ever went to London. He visited but little among the neighboring gentry, and seldom ever saw any one at the hall. He rarely rode, or hunted, or quitted home, and, altogether, became a sort of anchorite—a hermit—a Robinson Crusoe, shut up and fortified in his "castle."

The young ladies of the neighborhood pointed, and were terribly mortified to find the handsome and wealthy young peer so insensible to all their fascinations, while the sentimental ones looked upon him with romantic interest, and fell in love with his dark, melancholy eyes, and sighed to comfort him in his solitude.

Having nothing better to do, Disbrowe amused himself with looking after his tenantry and improving his estate; and this, with lying lazily on a sofa, and smoking no end of cigars, constituted his indolent and aimless life.

He felt a little ashamed of himself sometimes, and his useless existence. But a spell—a languor of mind and body was upon him, and he wanted a motive to make him rise, like another Sampson, and burst his bonds.

So passed the winter; and spring and summer found him still loitering at Disbrowe Park.

At odd times, he received short, spasmodic letters from his friend Austrey, to tell him they were "doing" gondolas in Venice, or

Saint Peter's at Rome, or risking their necks up the great Saint Bernard, or other cold and uncomfortable places in the Splügen Alps. According to his account, their travels were something in the style of the "Dodd Family Abroad"—a continued series of mishaps and misadventures, together with jealous Austrian governments, rampaging Italian beggars, savage and unreasoning couriers, or ferocious, brigandish guides, who would persist in not understanding him—Lord George—when he swore at them in English, and screamed out his directions in the same language. He further went on to express the strongest sort of contempt for the whole Continent, vehemently asserted England, with all its faults, was the only place fit for a rational Christian to live in. As for foreign scenery, he had a poor opinion of it. The Rhine was well enough, but not fit to hold a candle to the Serpentine, and as for Baden, Rastatt was worth a dozen of it. All this had very little interest for Disbrowe; but the postscript, that where Lord George wound up by informing him Norma was in excellent health and spirits, and "his affair" was progressing as "well as could be expected." At first, this used to invariably put Disbrowe in a fume; but he got used to it after a time, and almost as indifferent about Norma as the rest. Her father had joined them, evidently quite reconciled to the broken-off match, and, what was better still, great friends with the volatile young lord. It was quite uncertain when they would come back, but probably not until late the next autumn.

Of his American friends, since his arrival in England, he had heard nothing. As time cooled and toned down his feelings, he began to regret the hasty manner in which he had left his uncle's roof, who, harshly as he had treated her whom Disbrowe never named now, even in his own mind, had been always kind to him.

Therefore, in a fit of penitence, during the previous winter, he had written him a long and cordial letter, urging him to come to England, and visit him at Disbrowe Park, and bring Augusta and little Oriole with him.

It was strange, how ardently he wished to see the little, wild, elfish girl again; partly for her own sake, and the strange, strong love she bore him, and partly for her mother's sake—that dead mother, his first, his last, his only love.

Roses were in blossom, and the letter had been written in December, until, one morning, the mail brought him a brief note, in the well-known writing of Mr. De Vere. It was dated London, and informed him that he, and Augusta, and Orrie had arrived, and awaited him there.

Disbrowe took time to digest his surprise and pleasure, and immediately started for London, and went direct to their hotel. And there, as he had expected, he found meetings of old friends, that gleam like bright little flashes of unalloyed sunshine through this tangled life of ours, more than compensating us for the sorrow of parting.

Mr. De Vere looked half a dozen years older than when he had seen him last, and had a dreary, lonely look, the cause of which Disbrowe well understood. But Augusta was still more changed; she had wasted away to a shadow, with white, sunken cheeks, and hollow, lustrous eyes looking unnaturally dark and large in her thin and haggard face. All her old hauteur and lofty pride seemed to have faded away like a dream, and she stood before him dejected, spiritless, ghastly—like a spirit from the grave.

The deep mourning she wore contrasted glaringly with her pallid face and blue-veined, transparent hands, and Disbrowe was inexpressibly shocked and grieved as he beheld her.

"Orrie—he scarcely recognized her in the richly-attired, half-timid little miss, who shrunk back and eyed him askance with a glance half shy, half laughing, that reminded him with a thrill and a shock of Jacquetta. A year—most of it spent in the artificial atmosphere of a fashionable boarding-school—had robbed little Orrie of most of her eldritch boldness and brightness; but still it broke out fitfully at times. She had lost, partly, her wild, elfish, precocious look; and with her shining, coal-black hair smoothly braided, and her pretty dress of rich black silk, she was quite another being from the wild little kelpie in boy's clothes who had once stabled his horse. They all seemed to have changed; and Disbrowe half sighed as he took her in his arms and kissed her, and inwardly wondered if he had changed, too."

"And Frank," he said, "how is he?"

"Frank is quite well," said Mr. De Vere. "I got him a midshipman's commission, last winter, and he has gone off like a second Jago to seek his fortune. We found Fontelle terribly dull, and your kind invitation came at a most opportune moment. Change of climate may do something for Augusta, whose health is failing rapidly."

"I noticed Miss De Vere was not looking well," said Disbrowe, lowering his voice that she might not hear. "She is greatly changed since I saw her last. What is the matter?"

"That is a question I can not answer," replied dispassionately, with a sigh. "She has no bodily ailment, the doctors say; but something is evidently preying on her mind, undermining both life and happiness. In fact, she has never been the same since that visit of old Grizzle Howlett's, whatever she told her. Since that time she has pined and faded away; and if I believed in the Evil Eye, I should say my poor Augusta was under its influence."

"Have you never tried to discover what this strange secret is?"

"Repeatedly, with a sigh. I have no bodily ailment, the doctors say; but something is evidently preying on her mind, undermining both life and happiness. In fact, she has never been the same since that visit of old Grizzle Howlett's, whatever she told her. Since that time she has pined and faded away; and if I believed in the Evil Eye, I should say my poor Augusta was under its influence."

Disbrowe pressed his hand in silent sympathy.

"Do you think she would tell you, Alfred? She liked you, and she might. Do you really think she would?" he said, eagerly.

"I fear not, sir. When she refused to tell you, it is not likely she would make me her confidant—a comparative stranger."

"I am sorry! I am sorry! If she would only speak and tell, it might save her life—the poor Augusta—my poor, poor girl!"

"Does Grizzle Howlett still reside at the old inn?" asked Disbrowe, after a pause, to divert his mind from the subject.

"Yes, the old limb of Satan! Oh, Alfred! that a wretched old hag like that should have caused us all so much misery; but her day of retribution will come; by

assured of that, sir!" said Disbrowe, almost sternly. "And her *bon frère*, Captain Tempest, what has become of him?"

"Gone off in the 'Fly-by-Night' on one of his dark, devil's cruises of crime. He went shortly after you left. By the way, Alfred, can you tell me any thing of that young Spanish lad, Jacinto? We never could hear any thing about him after that day."

"Yes," said Disbrowe, over whose handsome face a dark shadow fell—the memory of that sad day. "Yes, he came with me to London; and, uncle, he was treated ungenerously. That boy was guileless of all wrong."

"I know it—I know it!" groaned Mr. De Vere. "Old Grizzle to taunt, to madden me, I believe, came with that villain Tempest to Fontelle, one day, and derisively told me all she had said about Jacquetta was false; all save in one particular—her being the daughter of this reckless freebooter. Jacquetta knew nothing of her father, nor of her mother, except that she was one of the frail and erring of her sex; and that of the frail and erring of her sex, and that never in the slightest action had her marriage vows been broken; that she knew nothing of Orrie save her birth, and that, oh, Alfred! that she refused you, loving you all the while. My poor boy! it was a sad day for you both when you met."

Disbrowe sat with averted head, his eyes shaded by his hand, and made no reply.

"And my poor, poor, wronged Jacquetta! My high-spirited, broken-hearted girl! Oh, Alfred! I can never forgive myself for the great wrong I have done her," groaned Mr. De Vere.

"She was cruelly wronged, sir; but you acted from a sense of duty, and were not so much to blame. Let the dead rest; I had rather not speak of her."

"Her loss, too, has preyed on the mind of Augusta," said Mr. De Vere, recurring to the former subject; "and, combined with the death of her brother, has increased the depression of her spirits, and left her as you see. Ah! Alfred, I am not very happy in my children!"

"Her brother?" said Disbrowe, with a start. "Do you mean—"

"My unhappy idiot son? Yes, he is gone," said Mr. De Vere, in a husky voice.

Disbrowe turned away in silence. "Had Jacquetta been alive!" was his thought; and a pang more bitter than he ever thought he could have felt for her again, pierced his heart.

It was arranged that they should spend a week in London before proceeding further, to enable Augusta to recover from the fatigue of her journey. Mr. De Vere was busy enough during that time in receiving and returning the visits of his old friends; and at the end of the week they all set off for Disbrowe Park.

Bright and radiant in the golden glow of a June evening, the stately home of Lord Earncliffe had never looked more beautiful.

Mr. De Vere's eyes lit up with pleasure and recognition, as he saw it; Orrie clapped her hands in delight, and cried: "Oh, how pretty!" and even Augusta's languid eyes sparkled with new and pleased animation.

"It is a beautiful place—an Arabia Felix—a garden of delight—a home for a queen!" she said, turning to Disbrowe, whose dark eyes were bright with pleasure and pride.

"I am glad you like it; it was my boyhood's home, and my father's, for many a generation, and so doubly dear to me."

"God bless old England!" cried Mr. De Vere, his eyes filling with tears. "It does my old heart good to look on her sunny homesteads once more."

"Oh, what pretty fountains, and flowers, and avenues, and trees!" exclaimed little Orrie, her black eyes sparkling like glass beads. "And, oh, Gustly look at the birds in those pretty little houses; and see the bees away over there; and, oh, look at that dear little church, with the splendid red and yellow windows! Oh, how nice!" cried Orrie, clapping her hands.

Disbrowe laughed at her enthusiastic admiration, which reminded him of the Orrie of other days.

"And Miss Orrie shall have a pony, too," he said, gayly. "Wait until you see the pretty little white Arab I have for you. Can you ride?"

"Oh, yes!—first rate. Can't I grandpa?"

"So you say; but self-praise, you know, is no recommendation, my little girl."

"Oh, I know!" said Orrie, shrugging her shoulders. "Miss Smith used to give us that for a copy; but I can ride, though, ever so well. Frank learned me."

"Taught you," amended Mr. De Vere.

"Oh! bother! I am so glad you have got a pony for me, cousin Alfred! May I call you cousin Alfred, as Frank used to do?"

"Of course—what else would you call me?"

"And may I ride out to-morrow morning?"

"You will be too tired to-morrow morning, after your journey—won't you?"

"Oh, la!—no," said Orrie, with one of her shrill laughs at the idea of such a thing.

"I'm never tired. Oh, what a pretty house it is, any way!—twice as nice as Fontelle."

"And yet you used to think Fontelle a very beautiful place, Orrie."

"Oh, I know! that was when I lived with old Grizzle—the nasty old thing!—and it was a great deal nicer than her house; but not near so nice as this. Oh, I should love to live here forever!"

"Unhappily, people don't live forever in England, *ma chère fille*; but you shall stay as long as I can keep you. You will miss Frank—will you not?"

"Yes, some—we used to quarrel so, you know, until grandpa sent me to school in—oh, just the horrid place in the world! I didn't like it at all. I'd a great deal rather grandpa had let me be a sailor, and went to sea with Frank in—oh, such a lovely great big ship, and such a sight of ropes! And Frank looked so splendid in his nice jacket, with all the bright buttons, and his cap with gold on it. Oh, he looked lovely!"

"Indeed!" laughed Disbrowe. "I should have liked to have seen him. And you used to quarrel when you were both at Fontelle?"

"Oh, yes! Frank used to get so ugly sometimes—it was all his fault, you know—and we used to have such a time! We made it all up, though, you know, before he left; and Frank says we will be married as soon as ever he comes back."

"Ah! that will be pleasant—won't it? When is he to come back?"

"In two or three years. That is a good long time, ain't it—but I don't mind, so long as I've got a pony. Oh, cousin Alfred, how nice you are!"

"Uncommonly so! The admirable Crick-

ton was nothing to me! But here we are at the house; and now, mademoiselle, we will see whether the inside suits you as well as the outside."

The servants, who had been apprised of their lord's approach, were drawn up in the hall to receive him as he entered with Augusta on his arm; and Orrie looked about her, quite awe-struck by their number and the splendor around her.

"Ain't this lovely, grandpa?" she said, in a whisper, giving him a pull.

"Very fine, kitten—a grand old manor."

"And such a lot of servants! Oh, my!"

"Tush! they will wear you. So you like it better than Fontelle?"

"I guess I do! I wish you would live here all the time, and not go back to Fontelle."

"But, it's not my house, monkey, and so I can't. It is Lord Earncliffe's, you know."

"Well—but he would let you stay, I guess. I mean to ask him, anyway."

"But that is not polite. People should not invite themselves. You must wait until he asks you."

Orrie gave a little impatient shrug.

"It's such a bother being polite, and I don't see any good in it, either. See here, grandpa—cousin Alfred isn't married, is he?"

"Not as I am aware of, my little nettle—why?"

"He ain't going to be, is he?"

"Well, I can't say, positively—you had better ask himself that. Have you any intentions of proposing to him?"

"No; you know I haven't. Didn't I tell you I was going to wait for Frank? But the young lady, with dignity, said I thought he might marry Gustly, and then we could all live here—couldn't we?"

"Frank and all, I suppose," said Mr. De Vere, laughing. "A rare plan, hornet, but I don't know what cousin Alfred and Gustly would say about it. You had better ask them—hadn't you?"

"I'm going to," said Orrie, as she turned to follow a spruce chambermaid to her room to be dressed for dinner.

The suggestion of Disbrowe's marriage recalled something Mr. De Vere had partially forgotten—that he was to have been married the previous year. It was a delicate subject, but he determined to ask Disbrowe the reason, and an opportunity occurred when they were left alone to chat over the "walnuts and the wine" after dinner.

"My dear Alfred, I expected to find you a happy Benedict by this time," he said, carelessly. "How comes it that you are suffering single blessedness still?"

"The match was broken off," said Disbrowe, looking intently at the orange he was peeling.

"Ah?" said Mr. De Vere, inquiringly.

"Yes, by the lady's desire. She did not fancy ratifying a contract she had no hand in making; and so she is Miss Norma Macdonald still."

"But I thought you said she loved you?"

"Well, I may have been mistaken—I don't pretend to be infallible; and, even if she did, young ladies easily get over such things. Try that sherry, uncle—it ought to be good, if age can make it so."

"*Vous vivez en roi!*" said Mr. De Vere, with a smile. "What a Sybarite you are, Alfred, in this luxurious home of yours!"

"Yes; as far as the good things of this world go, I believe I have got my share; but there are any other things, my dear uncle, who has not still some wish unfulfilled—some dreary if, never to be realized?"

"And yours is—"

"Where I left my heart—in the tomb of Jacquetta," he said, sadly.

"Strong love—strong and true! Oh, that Jacquetta had lived to be your wife!"

"Too late—it is something I can not think of calmly, even to this day. How little I dreamed, when I first saw Fontelle, that my dream, my hope, my day-star, was to rise within its walls. How little I dreamed, when I first met her, of all she was destined to be to me!"

There was a long pause, broken first by Disbrowe, who never would dwell long on that subject, and now turned the conversation on some other topic. And Mr. De Vere noticed that he never again spoke on the subject.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 87.)

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JILTED.

BY TOM GOULD.

They ask me why I look so sad,
While all around me seemeth glad:
Alack, that they should ask me why—
For I must answer with a sigh,
I'm jilted!

Unlucky fate for mortal man,
That blitheesome, laughing maidens can
Be cruel, when they should be kind,
And serve one so—but never mind—
I'm jilted!

She was as fair as fair could be:
She was—but what is that to me?
Her beauty never can atone,
Since she has left me here to groan—
I'm jilted!

'Tis true she had a pretty eye,
And used it well when I was by;
But oh! she fixed it on another—
Alas! that I can not smother—
I'm jilted!

She also had a pretty face,
And was a person of grace
Without. But not within her stays
Had she a spark—and Cupid says,
I'm jilted!

Let it be so; nor ask me more,
For that's a point on which I'm sore;
Whenever you tell it, think of me,
And softly whisper—Why, you see,
I'm jilted!

The Ranger's Revenge.

A STORY OF COLONIAL VIRGINIA.

BY CAPTAIN CHARLES HOWARD.

THE stormy debate was ended. The irresistible eloquence of Patrick Henry had carried the bitter resolutions against the odious Stamp Act, and the members of the assembly, still more or less excited over the tempestuous session, were deserting the old hall for their respective couches, for the debate had trended far into the night.

Fairfax Winthrop was the youngest member of the Virginia Assembly, and, as he emerged from the House of Burgesses, conscious of having performed a service for his native State, by supporting Henry's resolutions, a youth, whose hand clutched a riding-whip, stepped to his side.

The young assemblyman did not notice the youth in the crowd, until he uttered his name.

"Why, Courtney! what brings you here?"

"Sad, sad tidings," replied the youth, looking up into Winthrop's face with a sad expression, and taking the young patriot's hand, he gently drew him aside.

"Yes, yes, I am the bearer of bad news," he continued.

"Well, tell it, Courtney, and do not keep me in suspense," commanded Winthrop.

"Then Estelle Hyatt is—"

"The boy faltered.

"Is what?" demanded the young man, clutching his arm until he winced with pain.

"Dead?"

"Dead?"

"My God!" cried Winthrop, staggered by the dreadful and unexpected blow.

"Courtney, I can not credit you."

"Alas! I speak the truth," said the boy.

For a moment grief swayed the strong man like a storm-blown reed, and slowly he uncovered his eyes, and looked down upon the youthful messenger, upon whose rosy cheeks a tear glistened.

"When did she die, Courtney?" he asked, in tremulous tones.

"This afternoon," was the reply.

"And they want me there?"

"Yes."

"My place is there," said the Virginian.

"How lightless my future seems now. Oh, boy, it is a terrible thing to lose the only woman you ever loved!"

"Terrible!" echoed the youth.

A short time later, a man and boy were riding like the wind down a gloomy road.

Estelle Hyatt was the promised bride of the young and rising assemblyman. He was the only son of a wealthy and prominent Virginian; she the sole daughter of a farmer, in humble circumstances, whose home graced the loveliest valley among the mountains.

One year prior to the inauguration of our story, Fairfax Winthrop accidentally had countered the mountain beauty, and his noble heart, untainted with the crimes of every-day life, went out to her in hallowed love.

Often, therefore, they met among the mountains, and at last he made bold to enter Harold Hyatt's home as the lover of his daughter, and met a decided and unfeigned welcome.

And now, to think that the rude hand of death should strike her down upon the threshold of the fruition of hopes he had nursed so long! It was a terrible blow to the young man, and drove him, unresisting, to the precipice of insanity.

The gray streaks of dawn were illumining the East, when the distracted lover reached the house of mourning, and Courtney Favorite led him through the silent hall into the death-chamber.

The beautiful dead was alone.

Gently the messenger approached the couch, and throwing back the coverlet, he played the fairest face that ever grew cold beneath the hand of the dread destroyer.

A groan welled from Winthrop's heart, and bowing his head, he hid his eyes until he could calmly look upon the marble face he had often kissed in life.

At length he slowly withdrew his hand, and found himself alone—Courtney having left him alone with his dead.

He threw himself beside the couch, and kissed the cold brow of Estelle Hyatt. And thus her parents found him when they entered the silent chamber.

He remained through the day at the house of death, and at nightfall mounted his steed for a ride across the mountains to his own home.

Estelle, the people said, was the victim of heart disease. She was not alone when stricken. Mark Killton, a young mountaineer and wood-ranger—a playmate of Estelle's in childhood—sat with her in one of the chambers of her humble home. Suddenly, according to this ranger's story, she started from his side, and staggered backward with a shriek. He darted forward, caught her fragile form, and bore it, already inanimate, to the couch.

This was the substance of the ranger's narration, in which everybody put explicit faith, for he had, to all external appearances, proved himself a friend to the stricken family.

The matchless queen of night was soaring majestically toward the star-gemmed zenith, as Fairfax Winthrop rode across the mountains, with the heaviest heart that ever beat in the bosom of man.

Suddenly the sound of an approaching horse fell upon his ears, and in the center of a deep gorge, lightly lit by the mellow rays of the moon, he drew rein, resolving to meet the horseman there.

The sounds grew more distinct, and, at length, the new-comer entered the gorge.

Fairfax Winthrop had drawn rein in the shade, which did not screen him from the sharp eyes of the night-rider, for he suddenly paused before the young assemblyman, and leveled a pistol at his head.

Then Winthrop recognized the stranger.

It was Mark Killton, the mountaineer.

"What means this mysterious action, Mark?" demanded the patriot, to whom the ranger was well known.

"It means, sir, that I want to tell you a secret," hissed the stranger.

"A secret, Mark Killton? And is it necessary that, during the revealing of that secret, whatever it may be, a pistol must be leveled at my head?"

"It is, sir," answered the ranger.

"Then I calmly submit to the necessity."

A moment's silence followed, and the ranger leaned forward on his horse's neck.

"Fairfax Winthrop, I am leaving this country," he said.

"Never to return?"

"Never to return."

"What drives you hence?"

"Ah! that's the secret I'm going to divulge. Listen," and he lowered his voice.

"Winthrop, I loved Estelle Hyatt long before you encountered her. My love was as holy as yours; but your heirloom and position dazzled the poor girl's eyes, and drew her from my side. I learned to hate you, and one midnight I swore that she should never wed you."

"Man, I have kept—terribly kept—that red oath. Yesterday, armed with a subtle poison, obtained from old Contin, the hermit of these mountains, I sought her side. Boldly I made known to her my intentions, and before she could shriek, I thrust the drug between her coral lips, and—and—you can guess the rest."

"Villain!"

"Yes, I'm a villain—a triumphant one! Fairfax Winthrop, I have struck you through her. The ranger has had his revenge, and, in distant lands, he will gloat over it. I am going now. If you draw a weapon, or dare to follow me, I'll send a bullet to your brain."

As Mark Killton finished, he rode slowly away, but with face turned, and pistol directed at his rival.

Suddenly Winthrop's weapon flashed from his bosom, and his steed, stricken by glittering spurs, bounded forward, with a snort of rage.

The ranger discharged his pistol at his enemy; but in the uncertain light, the shot failed to take effect, and away he dashed with the avenger thundering at his heels.

Out from the gloomy gorge, over the mountains, and down into the valley, rode pursuer and pursued.

It was a fearful chase!

Now the avenger gained upon the ranger, and now, again, he lost ground. At length, in leaping a turbid stream, the mountaineer's steed sprained a fore ankle, which enabled the assemblyman to discharge his weapon at long range. The shot was not without effect, for Mark Killton's left arm dangled broken at his side.

A shriek of pain welled from his black heart, as, with a terrible imprecation upon his ill-luck, he dashed the bloody spurs into the bowels of his almost exhausted steed.

At last the brave horse could bear him no further, and sunk to the earth near to rise again.

Nerved to desperation by his situation, Mark Killton thrust his dirk between his teeth, and awaited his antagonist.

As Winthrop rode up, the ranger sent two balls forward in rapid succession; but before he could draw the third pistol, the assemblyman's weapon flashed, and the villain sunk back—dead!

The victor dismounted, and lifted the dead upon his steed.

"The hand that slew thee will not deny thy accursed body Christian burial," he said, riding slowly homeward.

His road led past the Hyatt home, and in the moonlight he was surprised to see Contin, the old mountain hermit, conversing with Estelle's father.

"What does this mean?" demanded Winthrop, bestowing an angry look upon the hermit.

"It means that this man has restored Estelle to life," said Hyatt.

Winthrop's inanimate burden fell from his grasp, and he sprang to the ground.

"Explain!" he cried, clutching the old man's arm.

"I sold yonder dead man a subtle poison—that counterfeits death for two days, when death silently ensues. I heard of the young girl's sudden death, and hastened hither. I saw the work of my poison. It was not too late to use the antidote. I used it, and praised be God! she lives."

"I took vengeance too soon," said Fairfax.

"No, boy," said the old man. "I know him to be a double-murderer, and you are not guilty of a dark crime."

I have but little to add.

A few months later, Fairfax Winthrop led Estelle Hyatt to the altar, and during the Revolution, he rendered his country efficient service, bequeathing a glorious record and a noble name to several proud families of Virginia.

Recollections of the West.

How Davy Crockett was made Colonel Crockett.

BY CAPT. BRUCE ADAMS.

DAVY CROCKETT had told the Texans at the shooting-match that "Old Sam" had sent for and wanted him bad, and he was going.

The morning of the fourth day after leaving Nacogdoches, found the hardy woodman dismounting in front of General Houston's tent, which had been pitched in a grove of live oak on the border of a small stream.

A sentinel was pacing back and forth before the tent, and as Crockett crossed the narrow path that had been trodden in the grass of the prairie, which marked the limits over which none might pass without order of the General himself, he was suddenly surprised by a sharply uttered—

"Halt!"

"Hullo! That means to stop perambulating whar I kem from! War you addressin' me, or war yer speekin' confidentially to yerself, young man?" asked Crockett, gravely turning to the astonished sentinel.

The latter, however, was saved the necessity of a reply, for at that moment the General, who had overheard the brief conversation, and doubtless recognized the voice, appeared from within the canvas and ordered the sentinel to pass "Colonel Crockett."

"So I'm Colonel Crockett, am I?" muttered Davy, as he started forward and grasped the hand of the "Old Man," as he was usually styled.

"Well, General," he cried, "you sent for me, an' I hev come!"

"And most heartily welcome you are, Colonel," said the General, cordially.

"Colonel again," muttered Davy, aside; then, turning in his usual abrupt manner to General Houston, he said, with the utmost gravity:

"General, I always make it a rule to be sartin 'n' right 'n' then go ahead. Now, what I want to know ar, how then devil did I come to be Colonel Crockett?"

"I have so commissioned you in the service of the Republic of Texas," said the General. "My adjutant will make out your commission as soon as he can procure, by forage, levying, or requisition, a sheet of paper to put it on. As yet, Colonel, the department has not supplied us with stationery!"

"General, you do me proud. Colonel Crockett sounds well; but, General, yer see I want to be right, I haint done nothing to deserve it, an' by ther buckskins of old Hickory, I can't shoulder ther load till I've had one bout with the yaller-bellies."

"It is like yourself, my brave friend," replied Old Sam, with a smile. "But, put your mind at ease. There is an expedition on foot for to-night, and I was in hopes that you would reach me in time to head it."

"Trot her out, General. I'm splicin' for a fight, an' old Sweetness here ain't spoke out since she left Nacogdoches, whar she show'd the Brazos an' Trinity chaps what a Kaintuck gun could do!"

This naturally led to a question upon the part of the General, and the "Colonel" related the adventure of the shooting-match, much to the amusement of his auditor, whose peals of laughter brought half the officers of the command flocking to the General's tent.

To these, Crockett, whose fame as an Indian-fighter, hunter, and marksman, had preceded him, was formally introduced, and for several hours the party remained, listening to the droll stories told by the Kentucky woodman.

As night came, General Houston drew Davy aside, and imparted the object of the coming expedition.

It had, by the merest chance, reached the ears of the Texan commander, that a large number of fire-arms, of English manufacture, were secreted in the house of a rich and influential Mexican who resided near the little town of G—, some twenty miles to the westward of where the "army" lay.

Outwardly the Mexican was a non-combatant, he having espoused neither cause, but declared his intention of remaining strictly neutral. Such being the case it was a delicate matter to arrest him, or search his house, for it was a mere rumor that the arms were there.

To the newly-made Colonel the command or wished to intrust the execution of his plans for discovering the truth or falsity of the report, fully trusting to Davy's well-

known shrewdness to bring him through, and thus earn the title he had given him.

The following afternoon, about an hour by sun, three men, dressed in a manner half-civilized, half-savage, rode up to the Don's fine mansion and requested permission to stay for the night.

The times were unsettled, and every man was suspicious, to a greater or less degree, of those around him, and hence for some time the Mexican refused point-blank to grant the request.

Finally, however, one of the strangers drew the Mexican aside, and whispered a few words in his ear that brought about a decidedly different aspect of affairs.

"Understand me, gentlemen," said the Don, "I take no part in this struggle, but, still, it would be unnatural for me to refuse a night's lodging to men who are on their way to fight for the land of my birth. And you, sir," he continued, turning to Davy Crockett, for he it was who had whispered the talismanic words, "if you have spoken falsely, and are one of the Texan army, instead of being on your way to assist my countrymen, I still trust that you will recognize the fact that I may be with my people in sympathy and yet remain neutral in the struggle."

"The greaser dug me in the short ribs thar, General," said Davy, when he subsequently related the conversation to "Old Sam." "An' I tell you I felt meaner'n a sheep killin' cur."

An ample repast was set before the recruits for the Mexican army, (3) to which ample justice was done, and an hour or so afterward they sought the couches that had been provided for them.

Davy was apparently sleeping soundly, when, about the middle of the night, the host came rapidly into the room, and after waking him, communicated the astounding intelligence that the house was surrounded by a Texan force of half a score men.

At the same moment, a clear, ringing voice hailed and demanded admission, stating that there were Mexican soldiers in the house, and that they were wanted.

Of course Crockett and his companions were dreadfully alarmed, they being totally unarmed, and hence capable of making no resistance.

In the most natural manner in the world they begged that if the Don could furnish them with weapons that he would do so, stating that they would defend the house to the last, or else cut their way through the enemy.

In the meantime the Texans were getting impatient, and already they were thundering at the door, demanding admittance.

"We must hev ther weapons, Don," said Davy, "or yer see we're bound to tell them fellers outside as how you war sendin' us on through to the border. I'm powerful sorry, but—"

"Say no more, gentlemen!" exclaimed the Mexican, now thoroughly decided by the well-simulated earnestness of Davy and the others. "You shall not be murdered by these dogs without. Come, follow me!" and he disappeared through a door, closely followed by Davy and his companions.

Passing through several rooms, they finally entered a narrow passage-way, in which the Mexican paused, and feeling for a moment along the wall, he pressed a concealed spring, and a panel flew back, disclosing a narrow aperture.

Entering here they descended several steps, where a second wall stopped further progress.

This, however, gave way as the other had done, and the next moment the party stood in a small, underground chamber, where, against the walls, upon the floor, and shelves that were arranged around, were piled the sought-for arms and accoutrements.

The receptacle was most skillfully concealed, and even had the Texan commander ordered an open search, the chances were that it would never have been discovered.

Quickly arming, they returned above, reaching the large room in front of the building only to be confronted by ten or a dozen stern-looking Texans who had gained access by means of a window that Davy had unfettered, and from whence he had displayed a signal some little time before the attack. There was no alternative but to surrender, which was done with the best grace imaginable.

The arms, most acceptable to the illy-provided patriots, were brought forth, and, in company with the neutral Mexican, were conveyed to where the army lay. The Don's life was spared, but his property confiscated, and himself sent over to his own country for which he had so much sympathy.

Thus it was that Davy earned his title of Colonel in the Texan service.

The most famous ruin in England, just now, is the young Duke of Hamilton, who has squandered a fortune of two hundred thousand dollars a year, and has contracted, or more properly expanded, debts to the amount of half a million more.

Short Stories from History.

The Baron Trenck.—Almost every boy has read that entrancing, but painful book, "The Captivity of Baron Trenck," which so fearfully illustrates the hatefulness of one-man power and the atrocious character of many kings. This story is related as having first suggested to the Baron the composition of his immortal book.

An English gentleman, traveling on the Continent, took refuge from a storm in the house of a countryman, near Aix-la-Chapelle. The incident brought him into company with another gentleman who had taken shelter there from the same cause: he was a man somewhat advanced in years, yet still preserving all the stronger lines of a fine person and noble countenance. The owner of the house had a pointer dog chained up in the apartment in which the strangers were sitting; and the Englishman observed that whenever the dog rattled his chain, his fellow sojourner turned pale, and appeared moved even to agony. "The noise of the dog seems to affect you, sir," observed the Englishman. "It does," replied the stranger, feelingly, "and had you, my good sir, been as long confined by a chain as I have been, you would, I believe, be as much affected as I am, whenever the rattling of a chain sounded in your ears. It is a weakness, I confess; but, alas! what else than weakness has the credulities of his enemies left to poor Trenck?"

An exclamation of surprise burst from the Englishman. "Yes," continued the stranger, "I am that Baron Trenck, of whom the world has heard so much." The Englishman owned the great satisfaction he had in meeting him; and after expressing, in lively terms, the sympathy which he felt for his misfortunes, intimated an earnest desire to know some of the particulars of his melancholy story; for, as yet, the narrative with which the public have since become so familiar, had not been published. The Baron very courteously complied; and left the Englishman no cause to regret the accidental detention, which thus procured him the gratification of hearing one of the most interesting narratives of captivity in modern times from the mouth of the heroic sufferer himself.

Criticism.—The late Mr. Cumberland used to say that authors must not be criticised, but shelled like the rhinoceros. The injunction would have been good were the shell of their own making; but it would be hard were the limit, or the nightingale to cease from warbling because they can not sing in a storm.

The art of literary condemnation, as it may be practiced by men of wit and arrogance, is much less difficult than criminal. A worthless book produces no great evil in literature; it dies soon, and naturally; but that induce severity of criticism, which lessens by one page the contributions of genius to the cause of human improvement, is a serious and great calamity.

The elegant author of the "Calamities of Authors," asks, "Who are the authors marked out for such attack?" "Scarcely," he says, "one of the race of scribblers; for wit will not lose one silver shaft on game, which struck, no one would take up. It must level at the historian, whose novel researches throw a light on the depths of antiquity; on the poet, who, addressing himself to the imagination, perishes, if that sole avenue to the heart be closed on him."

Such are the class of authors, who are the chief objects of this sort of criticism, which has sent some nervous authors to their graves, and embittered the existence of many whose talents we all revere.

Hawkesworth died of criticism; Tasso was driven mad by it, and even the calm Newton kept hold of life only by the sufferance of a friend, who withheld a criticism on his chronology, for no other reason but his conviction that if published, while he was alive, it would put an end to him.

Hawkesworth, says Dr. Kippis, in his biography of Captain Cook, was "invited to write the account of the late voyages to the South Seas, a fearful undertaking, and which, in its consequences, deprived him of peace of mind, and of life itself."

An innumerable host of enemies attacked it in the newspapers and magazines; some pointed out blunders in matters of science, and some exercised their wit in poetical translations and epigrams; but these, however much they might hurt his feelings as an author, did not probably make him suffer as a man, so much as those who censured him for the frequent heresy of his sentiments, and the infrequency of not a few of his narratives.

Nor is it surprising that he should have felt irritated, and vexed, and mortified that such a reception should be given to a work of which he thought he might be proud, and from which he drew so great an emolument (£8,000). But no respect for the services he had before rendered to religion or virtue, by his papers in the "Advertiser," and his "Notes to Swift's Letters," could obliterate the impression of his apostasy in the remarks which he introduced into the account of the "Voyage Round the World;" and it could not but aggravate the pain which both his friends and himself felt, when they considered that whatever was objectionable in this work, had come from his pen without provocation, and without necessity, either from the nature of the undertaking, or the expectation of the public.

Tasso had a vast and prolific imagination, accompanied with an excessively hypochondriacal temperament. The composition of his immortal epic, by giving scope to the boldest flights, and calling into effect the energies of his exalted and enthusiastic genius, while with equal ardor it led him to entertain hopes of immediate and extensive fame, laid most probably the foundation of his succeeding derangement. He twice attempted to please his ignorant and malignant critics, by recomposing his poem; and during the hurry, the anguish and irritation attending these efforts, the vigor of a great mind was entirely exhausted, and in two years after the publication of his "Gerusalemme Liberata," the unhappy bard became an object of pity and of terror.

Newton, with all his philosophy, was so sensible to critical remarks that Whiston tells us he lost his favor, which he had enjoyed for twenty years, for contradicting Newton in his old age; for no man was of "a more fearful temper." Whiston declares that he would not have thought proper to have published his work against Newton's "Chronology" in his life-time, "because I knew his temper so well, that should have expected it would have killed him."



THE RANGER'S REVENGE.